Commentary

Volume Sixty-six, Number Four, October 1978

Against the China Card

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

The Psychology of Appeasement

WALTER LAQUEUR

Falsifying Jefferson
Kenneth S. Lynn

Character in the Bible
Robert Alter

The Quality of Life
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Zionism, Racism, and Free Speech
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Books in Review
Dan Jacobson /
David Singer /Jeane J. Kirkpatrick /
Dorothy Rabinowitz /Marc F. Plattner /
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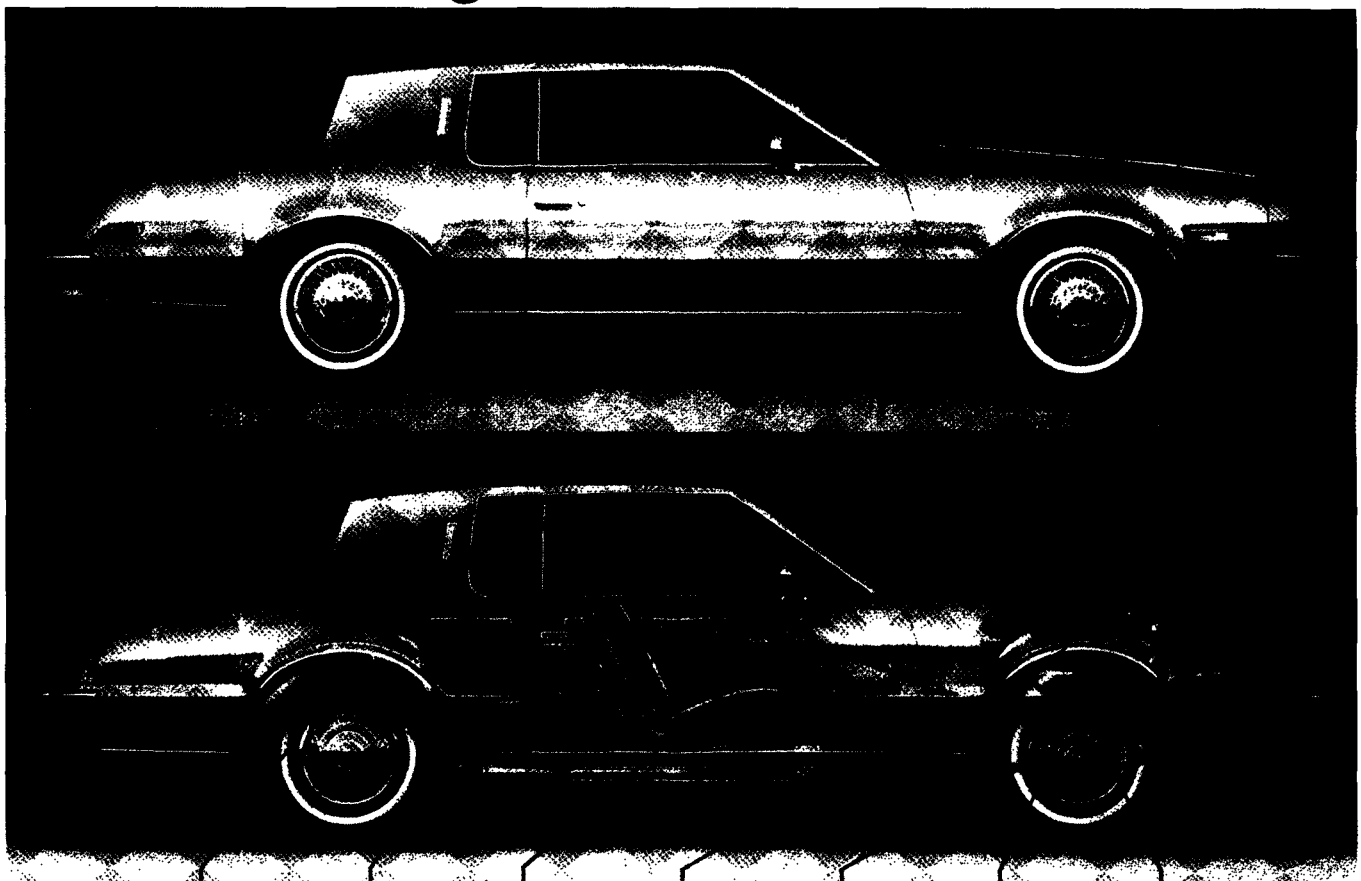

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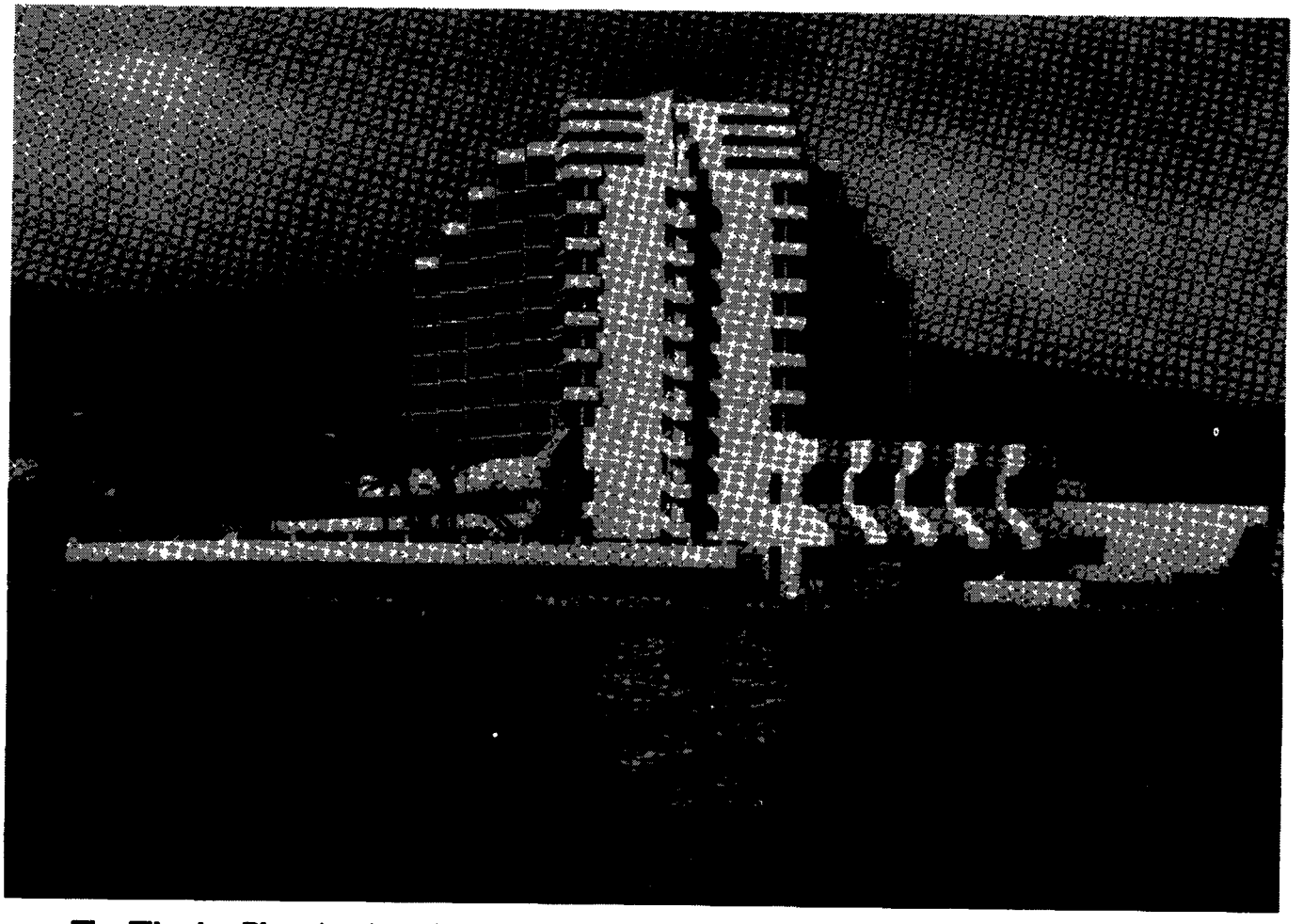

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The CIA

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Edward Jay Epstein seems to have abandoned his earlier hypothesis that I might be a Soviet "mole" within the CIA, in his article ["The War Within the CIA," August] he makes other equally far-fetched assertions which call for clear rebuttal.

I did not leak the so-called "family jewels" to Seymour Hersh. Mr. Hersh came to me before his December 22, 1974 New York *Times* article with a much exaggerated account of those past events. It was clear to me that he was going to publish that story, so I tried to bring him down to a more accurate perspective, and gave him no material he did not already have.

Second, my comments to Hersh and my testimony about the CIA during 1975 had absolutely no connection with my professional differences of opinion with Mr. James Angleton over how counterintelligence should be conducted in the CIA. Mr. Epstein seems to have missed the account of my conversation with Mr. Angleton on December 20, 1974, on page 396 of my book, where I clearly said that both he and I knew that his movement from the post as chief of counterintelligence was not connected with Mr. Hersh's article.

Third, my change in the CIA counterintelligence structure strengthened rather than weakened that effort over the way it was conducted previously, from which I could find no tangible results.

Fourth, I certainly did favor the recruitment of additional agents in so-called "hard target" areas, including the Soviet Union, following a program initiated in the mid-1960's in the CIA. I do not have access to the details of the Lipavsky case at this time, but I note from the public accounts of it that the CIA apparently tried him out and abandoned him after a few weeks of its usual cautious testing. The Soviets apparently utilized these tentative contacts as the basis for a concocted attempt to smear the Jewish activist movement.

Perhaps Mr. Epstein's next (fifth) theory to explain my change in the CIA's counterintelligence machinery and my 1975 testimony will look at the straightforward accounts of both contained in my book, *Honorable Men*. The first was to make counterintelligence more efficient, helping and not hindering our positive intelligence mission. The second was an appreciation that a new day had dawned from the old days of total secrecy and unquestioned executive power over intelligence, and a belief that the CIA must be accountable to the Congress and to the American people as well as the President in this new era. I stand by both of these beliefs.

WILLIAM E. COLBY
Washington, D.C.

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN writes:

William E. Colby seems to be playing a curious game of misdirection in claiming that I "abandoned" an "earlier hypothesis" that he was a Soviet "mole." Since I have never made such a claim, and have never believed that there are grounds for such a claim, I could hardly have "abandoned" it now. His attributing of this putative notion to me is pure fabrication. On the contrary—I believe the "mole" charge is a red herring which distracts from the real issue: whether or not Mr. Colby substantially damaged the capacity of the CIA to function as an intelligence agency.

Nor do I find Mr. Colby's "rebuttal" persuasive on specific issues. For example, he admits that he talked to Seymour Hersh about the "family-jewels" report at a time when this report was so closely-held that he had not briefed either the President or his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, on its very existence; yet he also claims that talking to Hersh about the top-secret report was not tantamount to "leaking" it since he presumed that Hersh was already fully acquainted with its contents! As a lawyer, Mr. Colby must know that it is an extremely shaky defense in espionage cases to argue that classified material is not being disclosed because the recipient already knows the secret. Even in the case of public officials dealing with journalists, it is epistemologically impossible to determine what a journalist actually knows to be true as distinguished from what he merely suspects might be true. Journalistic "knowledge" is as much a product of confirmation as

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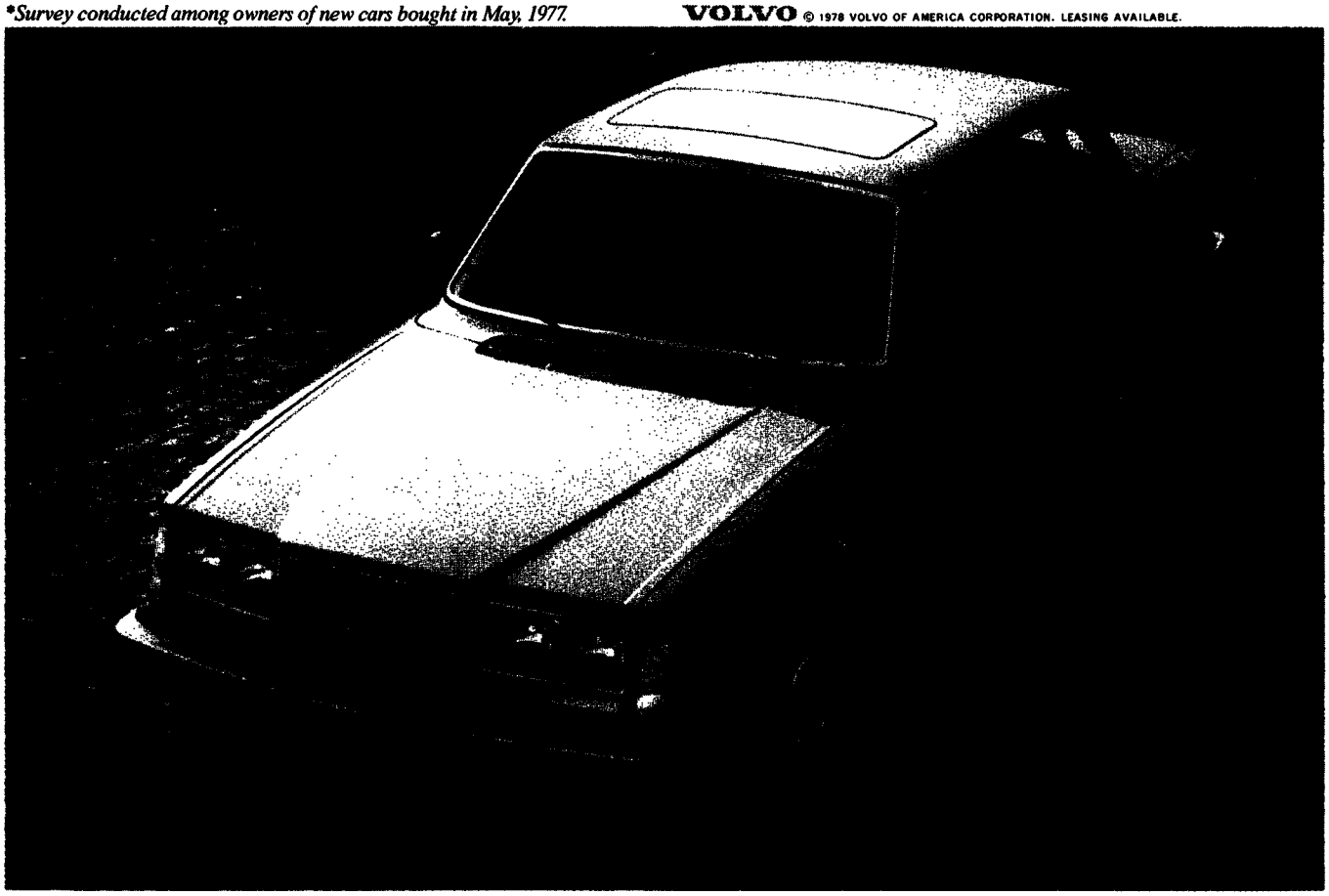

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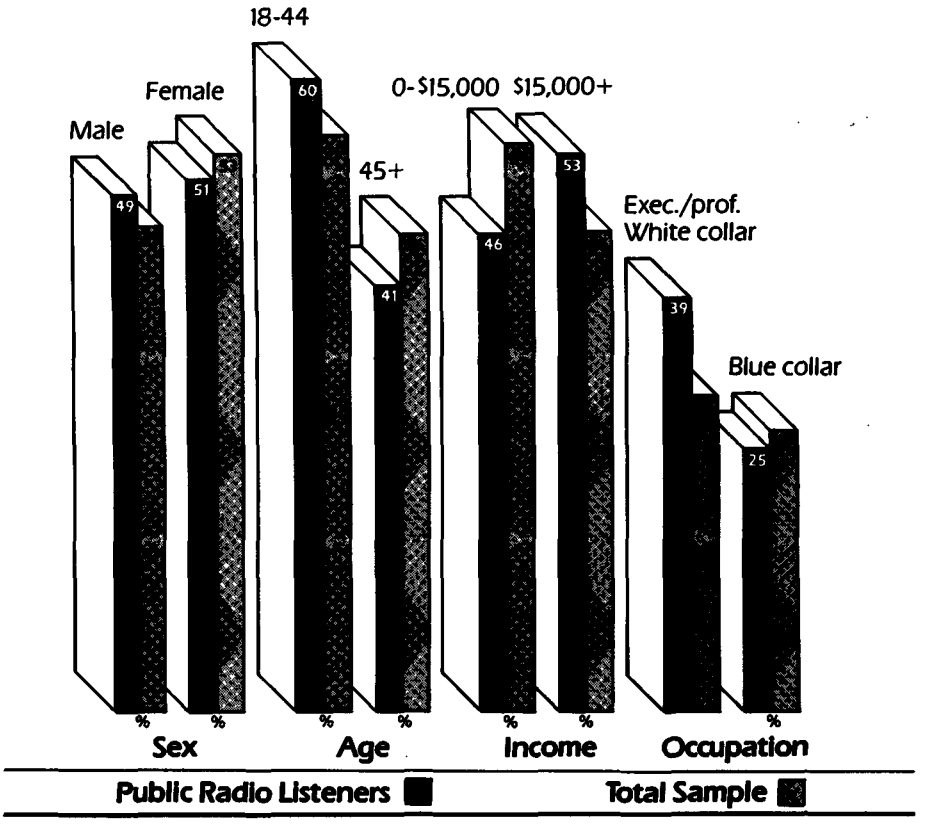

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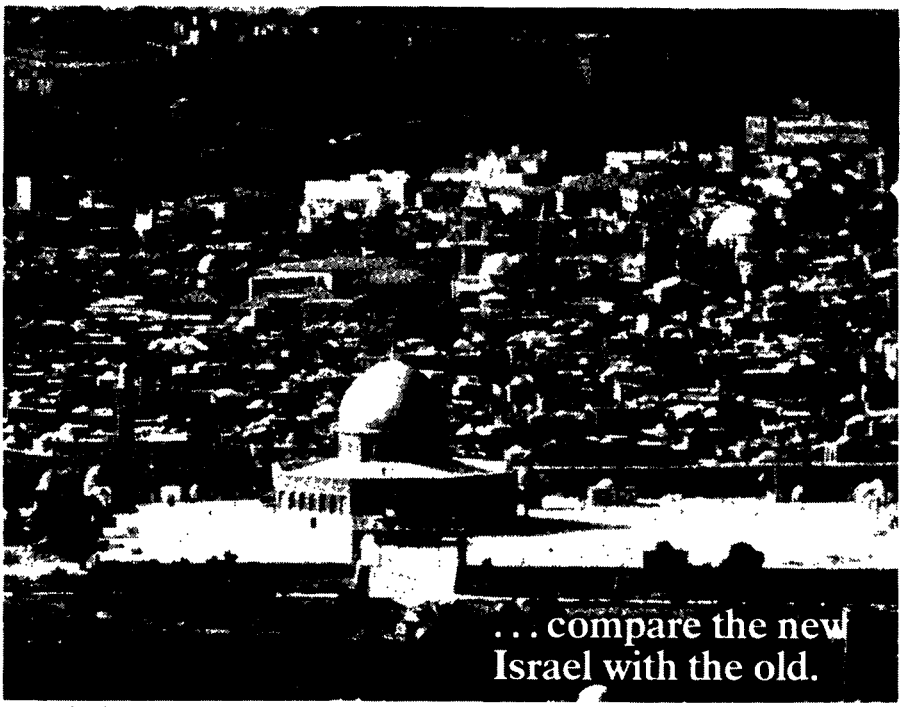

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HILTON INTERNATIONAL

it is of revelation; in this very real sense, Mr. Colby gave Hersh the story by confirming it. I find it hard to believe that a man of Mr. Colby's experience would not realize this was what he was doing when he told Hersh about James Angleton's involvement in the illegal mail-opening program.

Moreover, if Mr. Colby was not the original source for Hersh, why did he not immediately order an internal investigation to find out how a journalist had managed to obtain a copy of a report so secret that it had not even been shown to the President? When Richard Helms asked Mr. Colby about this matter, Mr. Colby indicated that he had not investigated because he already knew the source of the story: himself. All the evidence points to this conclusion: Hersh never actually had the "family-jewels" report, but Mr. Colby divulged to him parts of it that would publicly embarrass those in the counterintelligence staff who were proving most vexatious to him.

In asserting that he did not fire Angleton because of Hersh's disclosure, Mr. Colby is merely agreeing with what I wrote in COMMENTARY. As I explicitly argued, the Hersh story was only the *pretext* for firing Angleton, not the motive. The issue was, as Mr. Colby writes, "differences . . . over how counterintelligence should be conducted in the CIA." It was precisely to these "differences" that I addressed myself.

Finally, Mr. Colby grudgingly admits that his policy of recruitment in the Soviet Union led to the Lipavsky affair, but even now he apparently fails to see the danger of such a recruitment program. The danger, as I wrote in my article, is this: in a single stroke, the CIA, following Mr. Colby's policy, came close to compromising the entire Soviet human-rights movement.

I wish I could accept the explanations for his actions which Mr. Colby tenders in his book, but after speaking to those for whom he worked, such as Henry Kissinger, and those who worked under him in the CIA, I cannot accept his account as either straightforward or honest.

Andrew Young

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Andrew Young's outspokenness on Africa and the Communist challenge is not, as Carl Gershman

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would seem to suggest ["The World According to Andrew Young," August], an irrational outburst of naiveté or ignorance, but a deliberate reaction and counterbalance to certain dogmatically biased attitudes on the "challenges" that dominate American foreign policy.

We viciously criticize, without hesitation, the presence of Cuban troops in ten African countries, yet not a word is said about the French troops garrisoned in Zaire, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Gabon, Chad, Morocco, and elsewhere. We were horrified at the Cuban-backed Katangan assault—though it is questionable whether Cuban troops were even involved—on Zaire's Shaba province, yet no one seems to care about the invasion of the Comoro Islands and the murder of President Ali Soilih by French mercenaries. While we eagerly point out the undemocratic features of left-wing regimes, we support equally repressive right-wing governments as a bulwark against Communism.

Andrew Young's message is clear: the Soviet Union has an interest in Africa equal to that of the West. Its attempts to defend that interest are no more evil in nature than ours are.

SAM SHUBE
Far Rockaway, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is almost impossible to believe that Andrew Young's curious immunity from political attack can be based solely on President Carter's gratitude to him for having "delivered" the black vote. . . . Preoccupied as he is with an analysis of the antic blathering that has made Young notorious, Carl Gershman passes too quickly into a biography of Young and glosses too lightly over what is, after all, a prior consideration: on what does Andrew Young's marvelous freedom from responsibility depend?

Young is most certainly not the fool he pretends to be. Mr. Gershman explains the bulk of Young's rhetoric as rote Marxism, acquired during his days as a protester. But too much else Young has said boils down to mere absurdity, and is not explainable. . . . Certainly it seems that Young would have to take his post more seriously if he had to worry about job security. Evidently he does not.

The nation's press has deigned to smile tolerantly on Young, which says much about a group of men who can censure Senators and unseat Presidents. . . . That this rare and wonderful power has magically been withheld in the case of Young does much to explain the source of his mystical . . . existence as a political figure. Evidently he is performing some function which has the approval of the media. . . . When Young told the world that there were "perhaps even thousands . . . of political prisoners" in this country, why did the press not rise up . . . and crush the perpetrator of such an outrage? . . .

In his position of semi-power, Young dramatizes the worst fears of the unconvinced. "Better not let blacks have any power," goes the insinuation, "if they behave like Andrew Young." . . . Young . . . is doing to his race politically what Stepin Fetchit did to it socially. . . . Maybe Young does not realize the image his portrayal of the sullen, sharp-tongued, and resentful black is creating in the minds of the nation's TV viewers. But the press cannot be assumed to be innocent in this—it may be assumed to know exactly what it has created, and exactly what the effect will be.

FRANK M. CORNELL
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

CARL GERSHMAN writes:

Sam Shube is either badly misinformed or an apologist for Soviet imperialism in Africa. The French military presence in Africa is not comparable in any way to that of the Soviet Union and its proxies. The total number of Soviet-bloc troops in Africa now exceeds 50,000, including over 40,000 Cubans, 5,000 Russians, and 3,000 East Germans. French forces in Africa number 10,000 and they are not supplemented by troops from any other NATO county. Moreover, the great bulk of Communist troops in Africa are militarily active in Angola and Ethiopia, countries whose regimes would not exist and could not survive against domestic opposition without foreign military backing. But three-fourths of the French troops in Africa are not engaged militarily (5,000 of these are in the tiny Republic of Djibouti), while the other one-quarter are fighting sporadically against foreign-backed rebels in Chad and the Western Sahara. Further, the French military presence is a *response* to the Soviet thrust and has been prompted by American inaction. This has been recognized even by the left-wing British *Guardian*, which noted that "in the face of Russian penetration, it is the French who have decided to make a fight of it and not a walkover."

This said, I must commend Mr. Shube for accurately stating Andrew Young's message: "the Soviet Union has an interest in Africa equal to that of the West. Its attempts to defend that interest are no more evil in nature than ours are." If neutrality in the East-West conflict is not the policy of President Carter, and I do not think that it is, it follows that one must ask why Young continues to hold his post. Frank M. Cornell seems to be saying that the answer is reverse racism: if Young were white, he would have been fired a long time ago. It is perhaps more accurate to say that Young reflects the views of many people in the Carter administration, but is able—and expected—to be more indiscreet because he is black.

Mr. Cornell also charges that Young is doing harm to the black image. I find this rather condescending, and it also obscures the real damage that Young has done to the cause of racial equality. Ideally, blacks should be as free as whites to make mistakes and say offensive things (or to perform brilliantly) without having to be regarded as image-bearers for their race. The goal of the civil-rights movement, in this respect, was to enable the American Negro to be something other than a "race man," a term used by Gunnar Myrdal in *An American Dilemma* to denote an aspect of racism according to which the Negro, regardless of the degree of distinction he is able to achieve, is always seen "as a representative of 'his people,' not as an ordinary American or an individual in humanity." (One must be a *black* leader or writer or official, but one is not permitted to speak to the general interest of society.)

Young's decision to revert to racial role-playing in his capacity as Ambassador to the United Nations is thus a regression in terms of the aspirations of the civil-rights movement to liberate the American Negro from the obligation to define himself, and to be defined, strictly in terms of his race, and not in terms of his individual humanity. The cost of this regression has been a corruption of moral vision which manifests itself in Young's inability to see beyond the issue of race in world politics to the issue of human freedom.

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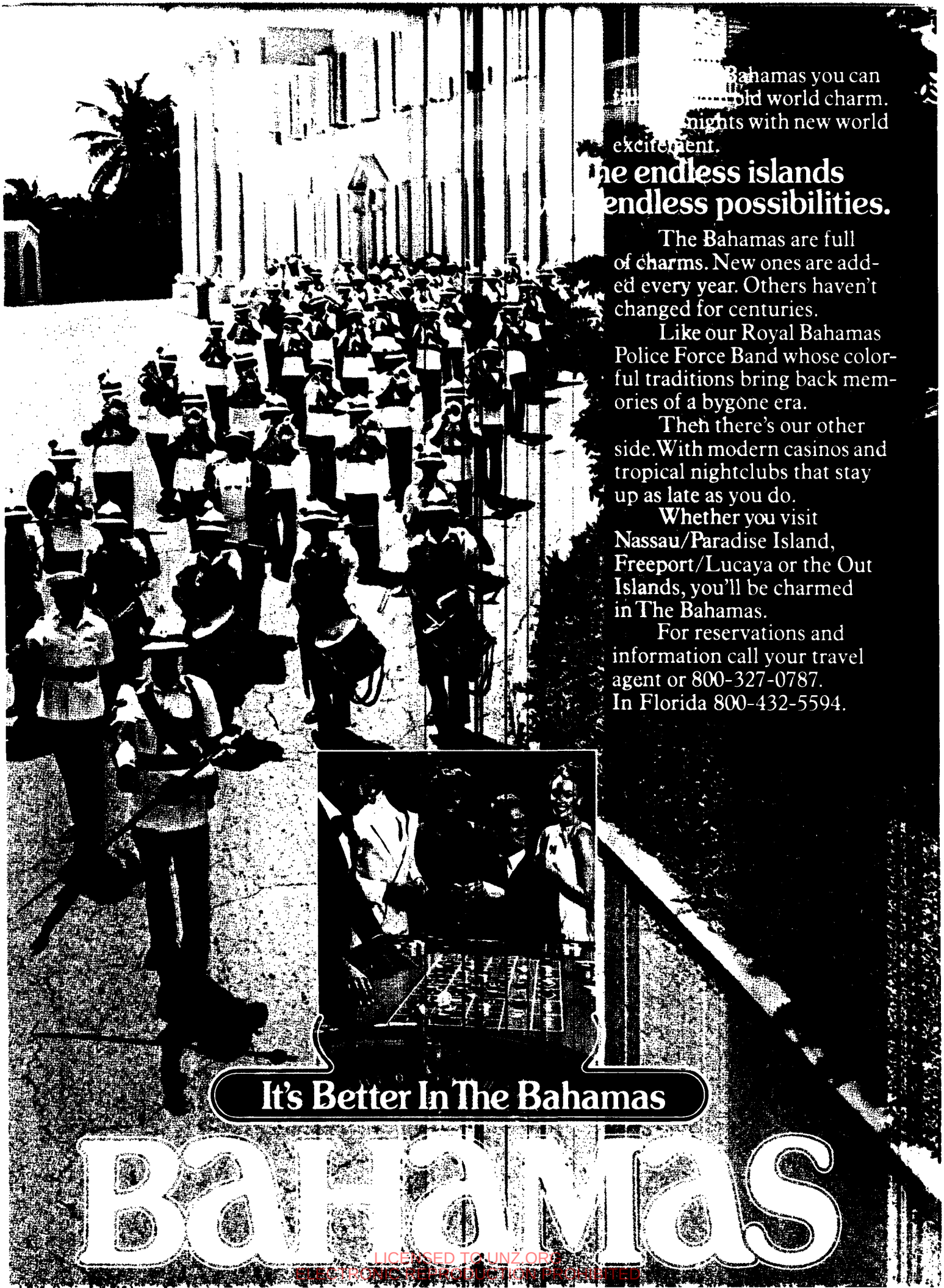

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Stravinsky

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman ["Stravinsky's Stature," Music, July] has provided an interesting assessment of the many-faceted career of one of the 20th century's most influential artists. His points regarding the authorship of the composer's prose works seem well-taken and fair. However, there are a few ideas concerning the music itself which require further discussion.

Mr. Lipman's main point appears to be that without the added dimension provided by the prose works, the essence of Stravinsky's personality would remain unknown, as it is not readily discernible purely on the strength of his music. The composer is seen as "that rare puppet who chooses his own masters," but a puppet nonetheless. The basis for this judgment is Stravinsky's continual borrowings from various earlier periods and composers; this material, according to Mr. Lipman, remains more or less intact in Stravinsky's hands.

But one cannot classify Stravinsky so easily, nor bend the facts to fit one's view of him. First of all, it is entirely incorrect to imply that the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* represent Stravinsky's attempt to combine Debussy's style with his own; both the work's structure and its harmonic language have nothing to do with the principles of Debussy. Stravinsky himself makes this clear in his memoirs:

> While composing my *Symphonies*, I naturally had in mind the man to whom I wished to dedicate them. I used to wonder what impression my music would have made on him, and what his reactions would have been. I had a distinct feeling that he would have been rather disconcerted by my musical idiom, as he was, I remember, by my *Roi des Etoiles*, also dedicated to him. . . . I had certainly experienced considerable evolution since then, and not in the direction pointed to by the tendencies of the Debussyist period.

Another work mentioned by Mr. Lipman, this time as a borrowing from Tchaikowsky, is the ballet *The Fairy's Kiss*. While it is certainly true that the musical ideas are entirely those of the earlier composer, the logic through which they are linked together and the terrible violence done to them belong to Stravinsky. This music is no tribute, but rather a sarcastic comment on a lush style which Stravinsky had come to abhor. One need only pay attention to the section wherein the melody that became known as "None But the Lonely Heart" is tossed about from key to key in a most heartless fashion, to realize that Stravinsky's attitude here was far from being deferential.

Interestingly enough, in his discussion of the works of the composer's old age, Mr. Lipman is of the opinion that they stay "well within his [Stravinsky's] own brand of diatonicism," a statement that is as untrue as it is contradictory with regard to the earlier part of the essay, for if Stravinsky were really as dependent upon other composers as he is presented here, it would be impossible to speak of his own brand of *anything*.

A final statement of Mr. Lipman's remains to be disputed. How is it possible to advance the idea that Stravinsky's music has a tendency "not to stick very well in one's mind"? The many innovations in orchestral sound that he created, as well as his employment of unusual instrumental combinations, make each composition a world unto itself. (For example, having once heard it, who will fail to recognize the strangely-spaced E-minor chord with which the *Symphony of Psalms* begins?) And despite all of Stravinsky's changes of style, orchestration, medium, etc., is there not always a special something, a particular twist given the material, which positively identifies each work as a product of the same unpredictable genius? Stravinsky may be very difficult to pigeonhole, aesthetically speaking, but surely he deserves a more complete and generous assessment than that of Mr. Lipman.

BRYAN J. BESSNER
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SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

Taken *in toto*, the large scale of Stravinsky's borrowings can hardly be doubted. In individual cases, his particular debt to his earlier colleagues is in one work greater, in another less great. I did not mean to suggest that the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* sounded like the "impressionist" music for which Debussy was then and remains now famous. But the *Symphonies* were after all dedicated to Debussy's memory, a curious act of homage to the past for a composer then seen, as Stravinsky was, as an arch-revolutionary. And there is a notable aesthetic relationship in clarity, timbre, absence of sentimentality, and general leanness between this work of Stravinsky and some of the music Debussy was writing toward the end of his life—as may be heard in a performance of several of the Frenchman's *Etudes* (1915) by various American pianists who have long been associated with contemporary music.

In discussing *The Fairy's Kiss*, it is slightly inaccurate to say, as Bryan J. Bessner does, that its "musical ideas are entirely those of" Tchaikowsky himself; indeed, Eric Walter White, in his standard book on Stravinsky's music, writes: "There are also [in *The Fairy's Kiss*] numerous passages and fragments of his own [Stravinsky's] invention." But surely the point of all this is that the identification between lender and borrower was so complete—at least as far as the borrower was concerned—that Stravinsky could continue in the same vein as Tchaikowsky and years later not be able to remember which was Tchaikowsky's music and which was his own. The sarcastic touches in the score seem to me in no way to affect the general impression the piece makes: that the passage in Stravinsky's memoirs which states that the writing of *The Fairy's Kiss* afforded "an opportunity of paying my heartfelt homage to Tchaikowsky's wonderful talent" is to be taken as authentic.

The fact of Stravinsky's essential diatonicism—even in his serial period—is, I believe, generally recognized; Roman Vlad, for example, in his adulatory study of the composer, writes the following about Stravinsky's first completely twelve-tone work:

> When we listen to *Threni*, which is after all a hundred-per-cent dodecaphonic, serial work, we get the feeling of a composition governed by the tonal and modal sensibility characteristic of all Stravinsky's works from his early years of maturity onwards.

Stravinsky of course did write, in the phrase I used and which Mr. Bessner quotes, "his own brand" of music. What is remarkable, I must stress again, is the extent to which that brand was composed of borrowings from others. Paradoxical as

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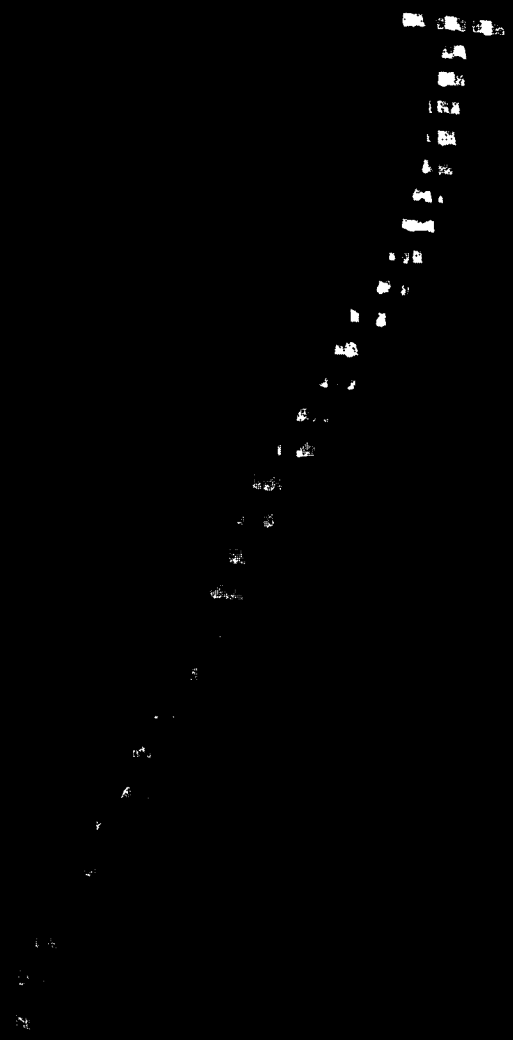

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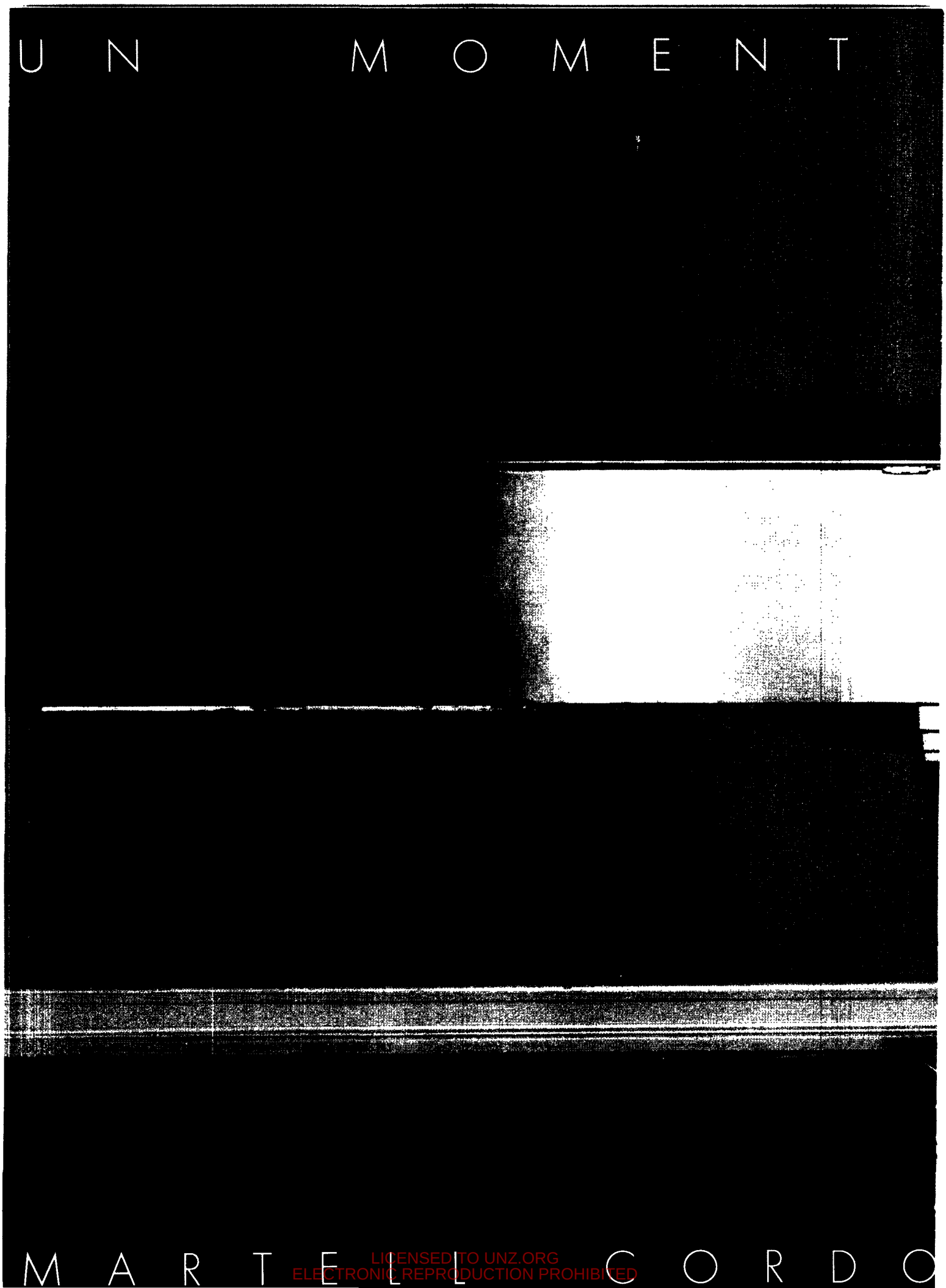

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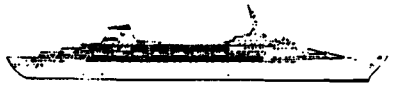

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it may sound, his musical personality was characterized by its own frequent abnegation. It is this typical chameleon-like quality which may well be responsible for his post-*Sacre* music's not becoming a permanent part of the standard repertory. No matter how distinguishable this music may be in detail, in broad outline it suffers from his reliance on the music of others. His later music lacks the quality of being transcendentally memorable; this is only another way of saying that it does not stick particularly well in the minds of audiences and even most highly competent musicians.

Regarding Mr. Bessner's closing words, I can hardly make any claim to completeness in discussing Stravinsky as musician or man, and the field plainly remains open to everyone else to supply more and different facts and opinions. I am, however, curious about Mr. Bessner's suggesting a more "generous" consideration of Stravinsky. Two questions regarding this word come immediately to mind: would Stravinsky have asked for such indulgent treatment for himself, and could he—in the light of the vitriolic criticisms of others issued in his name—reasonably have expected it from posterity?

Wittgenstein

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although there is much that William Barrett ["Wittgenstein the Pilgrim," August] has to say about Wittgenstein's philosophy that I would want to take issue with, here I want only to point out a number of factual errors in his remarks about Wittgenstein's life.

1. Mr. Barrett says that "all of Wittgenstein's brothers ended their lives in suicide." Three of his four brothers took their own lives, but his brother Paul, the pianist, did not.

2. Mr. Barrett says that Wittgenstein completed the *Tractatus* while he was in an Italian prison camp. In fact, the work was completed some three months before he was taken prisoner.

3. Mr. Barrett states that the *Philosophical Investigations* "finally appeared posthumously, in 1956." It first appeared in 1953.

4. Mr. Barrett states that Wittgenstein renounced his fortune sometime in the 1920's. He renounced his fortune in 1919.

5. Mr. Barrett states that Wittgenstein first went to England in 1911. He first went there in 1908.

6. Mr. Barrett writes: "Russell had no word of Wittgenstein during the war [i.e., World War I]." In fact, Russell received a letter from Wittgenstein in January 1915, and also two letters written in May and October 1915.

7. Mr. Barrett states that Wittgenstein's father, besides being an important industrialist, was a minister of state. In all my reading about Wittgenstein, I have never seen any mention of the fact that Wittgenstein's father was a minister of state. I would be interested to hear where Mr. Barrett got his information.

8. Mr. Barrett states that "there is no indication that Wittgenstein ever thought of himself particularly as a Jew." I'm not sure I know exactly what that means; but readers of COMMENTARY might be interested in the following incident reported by Fania Pascal (in "Wittgenstein: A Personal Memoir," *Encounter*, August 1973). In the summer of 1937, Wittgenstein visited Pascal with the announcement that he had come to make a confession. One of his confessions was this: "He understood that most people who knew him, including his friends, took him to be three-quarters Aryan and one-quarter Jewish. In fact the proportion was the reverse, and he had done nothing to prevent this misapprehension."

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WILLIAM BARRETT writes:

I am thankful to George Pitcher for the points he brings forward, though none of them, except possibly the last, would lead me to alter the portrait of Wittgenstein I tried to sketch; and some of them seem to me to reinforce what I said. I suspect that what really bothers Mr. Pitcher is my interpretation as a whole, and this would be a more profitable subject to discuss; but the present is not the occasion, and that discussion would be better carried out in the fuller context of my book, *The Illusion of Technique* (Doubleday), which has since appeared. I confine myself therefore as briefly as possible to the items he mentions.

1. That three of his four brothers committed suicide would still seem to suggest that Wittgenstein's family background was troubled—and that was my point.

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Business and the rational mind VI

The corporation and human values•Science vs. the liberal arts•Continuing to grow

Some of the most fundamental problems of business today are those having to do with human relations and human values, and this seems likely to continue for years to come.

We have crossed the threshold of an era of scientific and technological development that has already altered the world we live in more sharply than at any time in history, and is continuing to alter it. It seems to us imperative that mankind's burgeoning knowledge be based on sound moral and ethical values.

We must continue to raise the standard of living in a world whose population is growing prodigiously even after some slowdown in recent years and, through this improved living standard, preserve and enlarge the freedom of the individual.

Whether or not mankind achieves the potential made possible by advanced technology, and to what degree, will depend in large part on the availability of sufficient economic freedom to provide scope for human resourcefulness; a broadly educated populace; and the confidence and the will to keep pushing ahead.

Mobil is deeply involved in all of these spheres. Perhaps our first and most basic requirement is for people—for an adequate and continuing reservoir of the essential skills without which a company in our business cannot succeed.

What sort of people make up our company, and what do we try to do with them and for them?

Their skills range from accounting through secretarial to zoology. In our recruiting, once we establish the technical or scientific qualifications of an engineer or a chemist, for instance, we look for about the same qualities in both the scientifically trained and the liberal arts students. We have learned that a business hires the whole person, and that in the long term motivation and character traits are more important than specific skills and knowledge.

Our business is so complex, even in its nontechnical aspects, that no one person can master all of it; so, to do one's job, one has to be able to work effectively with others. In a person's supervisory work, one of his or her prime functions must be the development and perceptive coaching of subordinates, since today they must accomplish most of the work and tomorrow one of them may have to replace him or her. Thus individuals with broad experience, the ability to think clearly and productively, and a determination to improve the status quo can make substantial contributions to the corporate effort.

The job of management is in the most fundamental sense the job of encouraging and helping people to develop themselves—keeping in mind that it is always some *one* person who is being trained, and that each person will differ from his or her peers in respect to specific needs and capabilities. Management must provide the sort of employment and work experience that will utilize the individual's abilities more effectively than those abilities could otherwise be used.

We have learned by experience that when we are looking for a man or woman with executive ability to promote—and our need for managers who can move up is endless—an individual's ability to deal with abstract problems involving judgment and the ability to reason is often more significant at that juncture than any technical knowledge.

We are in a technology-intensive industry and therefore will continue to need highly trained and skilled scientists and technicians. But science is concerned largely with the measurable, and when you have summed up all the factors of an individual that can be measured, you still have not described nor understood that person. What is critically important in the long term is the broader dimensions of knowledge and insight that enable people to deal successfully with a variety of social and economic problems.

We know that in our own case we require young people of moral stamina who can think and who can identify priorities. Given such individuals, along with the good sense of the American public once it has the facts, we believe that freedom can survive in our country and that a resourceful, well-managed business can prosper, benefiting from and contributing to the growth and development of the people who constitute it.

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ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE an artist appears whose work is not only beautiful and utterly original, but whose vision seems uniquely suited to the taste of a particular audience of art lovers. Just such a happy conjunction has occurred in the case of the young American artist David Bennett, from whom the editors of COMMENTARY have commissioned this strikingly brilliant original print. Two hundred impressions have been made. One of them has been presented to the Jewish Museum in New York, where it now forms a part of the permanent collection. The plates have been destroyed, and no more impressions will ever be executed.

THE WORK The venerable patriarch Jacob is captured at the moment of bestowing his precious gift, the coat of many colors, on the child of old age whom he loved, as the Bible says, "more than any other of his sons." At the center, Joseph the dreamer looms monumentally as his older brothers look on in distress and envy and his father wraps the legendary robe around him.

THE TECHNIQUE In this linoleum cut, the artist has utilized a highly decorative style with simplified forms expressed in bright, flat colors. Never has the coat of many colors appeared so rainbow-like or breathtakingly vivid. By limiting himself to the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, juxtaposing and surprinting to explore their potential for richness and contrast, the artist has achieved a technical tour-de-force in which surface brilliance and depth of feeling combine to produce a work of sinuous beauty.

THE ARTIST David Bennett is a rare phenomenon. He is an American whose initial recognition has been earned abroad, and whose acclaim has turned largely on his sensitive and profound handling of religious subjects. Since his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Delfs in Munich in 1974, his work has been seen and repeatedly applauded throughout Western Europe. A typical European review extols the jewel-like effect of his work; another compares him to Chagall "in his ability to free biblical representations from crusty traditions and present them anew." Bennett's first American one-man exhibition will open next fall at the Maurice Spertus Museum in Chicago, and will travel from there to the Judah L. Magnes Museum in San Francisco, the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles, and the Jewish Museum in New York, among others.

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2. That Wittgenstein finished the *Tractatus* three months earlier than I say rather increases one's awe at the concentration of the man who could complete such a work amid the life of the trenches. That was my point.

3. 1956 for 1953 as the date of *Investigations* was a plain typo on my part, which I'm sorry not to have caught; but the earlier date still leaves the work posthumous. When we consider the ego of the usual writer in its clamor to get published, the author who guards his masterwork to himself, even when substantially completed, is a rare and complex personality.

4. That Wittgenstein divested himself of his fortune earlier than I say could indicate even more markedly the unworldly and dedicated side of his personality—the "Alyosha" streak in him, as his sister called it.

5. My concern (as will be seen more clearly from my book) is with the intellectual chapter in Wittgenstein's life that begins with his entry into Cambridge and his relation with Russell. The earlier visit to England in 1908 is not a part of this.

6. On Wittgenstein's being cut off from Russell during World War I, I was following Russell's own poignant words: "I do not know whether he has solved it [the problem of tautology], or even whether he is alive or dead" (*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, p. 205n). The years 1916, 1917, 1918 would be a separation by the war. Russell evidently thought so.

7. As a powerful industrialist, Wittgenstein's father had a considerable voice in Austrian state councils, with or without portfolio. The point is that he was not merely rich but a powerful figure in every way. The combination of a powerful father image and three sons who committed suicide would seem to be a not insignificant element in the psychological background of the family.

8. In view of his mixed background, of the Vienna ambience generally, and of the fact that he listed himself as a Catholic, it makes sense to ask in what ways and how deeply Wittgenstein was conscious of himself as a Jew. And on this question my remarks were entirely tentative and exploratory. The conversation to which Mr. Pitcher refers can be read to confirm my conjecture. Wittgenstein was forty-eight at the time it took place. It could very well be argued that a man who has reached that age—particularly a man of high moral principle like Wittgenstein who would not be motivated by petty concerns of snobbery or caste—without correcting the impression about his background held by those who knew him, was indeed someone who did not think it important whether a person were Jewish or not.

Finlandization

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I became aware of Walter Laqueur's article, "The Specter of Finlandization" [December 1977], only after reading his letter, "A Reply to the Finns" [Letters from Readers, May]. The article is full of misinterpretations and outright errors, and consequently I feel I must not let it stand without comment. . . .

Mr. Laqueur assumes that the Finns are paying a price in political terms for Russian magnanimity in not turning Finland into a Soviet republic in World War II. But the Finns are not indebted to the Soviet Union. They averted a Soviet military occupation and an unconditional surrender not because of Russian generosity, but because of their own tremendous efforts. . . .

Mr. Laqueur is afraid that the younger Finns might be tempted by the example of their Karelian brothers into becoming part of the Soviet Union. But there is no such example. Before the war, 12 per cent of the Finnish population lived in the province of Karelia. But when it was ceded to the USSR virtually the entire population, including the Communists, left. The Russians took over a province emptied of people. The uprooted Karelians were resettled; the Finnish government gave them compensation for their lost property; and there is no refugee problem, either.

It is misleading to write that the military restrictions imposed upon Finland were set by the Soviet Union. These restrictions date from the peace treaty of 1947 and were by no means opposed by the principal Western signatory, Great Britain, which did not want to make Finland an issue in British-Soviet relations. The acquisition of missiles was prohibited by the peace treaty, yet at the request of the Finnish government, the signatories agreed in 1962 that Finland was entitled to acquire defensive guided missiles.

Let us now look at the 1948 Soviet-Finnish Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. The treaty confirms in its preamble the Finnish desire to stay neutral. And President Kekkonen has repeatedly stated that Finland would stay neutral if the Soviet Union became involved in a war that did not touch Finnish territory. He has also pointed out that "Finland will not attack any country of its own free will, nor is it obliged to do so by any treaty, nor will it allow any state to do it through Finland."

The first article of the treaty stipulates that if Finland should become the object of an armed attack by Germany or its allies, or if the Soviet Union should be attacked through Finnish territory, Finland will fight on its own territory to repel the attack. The Soviet Union may render assistance, if needed, but this must be agreed upon separately. The contents of this article correspond with President Paasikivi's views. A year before the treaty was concluded (1947), he told a Swedish newspaper that if anyone tried to attack the Soviet Union through Finnish territory, Finland would fight against the aggressor and accept assistance from the Soviet Union if necessary.

The second article states that the parties "will consult in case there is found to be a threat of the military aggression referred to in Article I." In the Novosibirsk statement of 1961, the Soviet Union expressed the wish that the Finnish government observe developments in Northern Europe and in the Baltic and consult with the Soviet government on the measures it thought should be taken in the area. In the opinion of the Finnish statesman, Max Jacobson, these consultations should be undertaken on the initiative of Finland. The Russians have voiced their opposition to this interpretation of the article, but to nothing else.

Only these two articles deal with military matters; the others contain mutual declarations by the contracting parties that they will act in a spirit of cooperation and friendship, develop economic and cultural relations, and follow the principles of mutual respect for national sovereignty and of noninterference.

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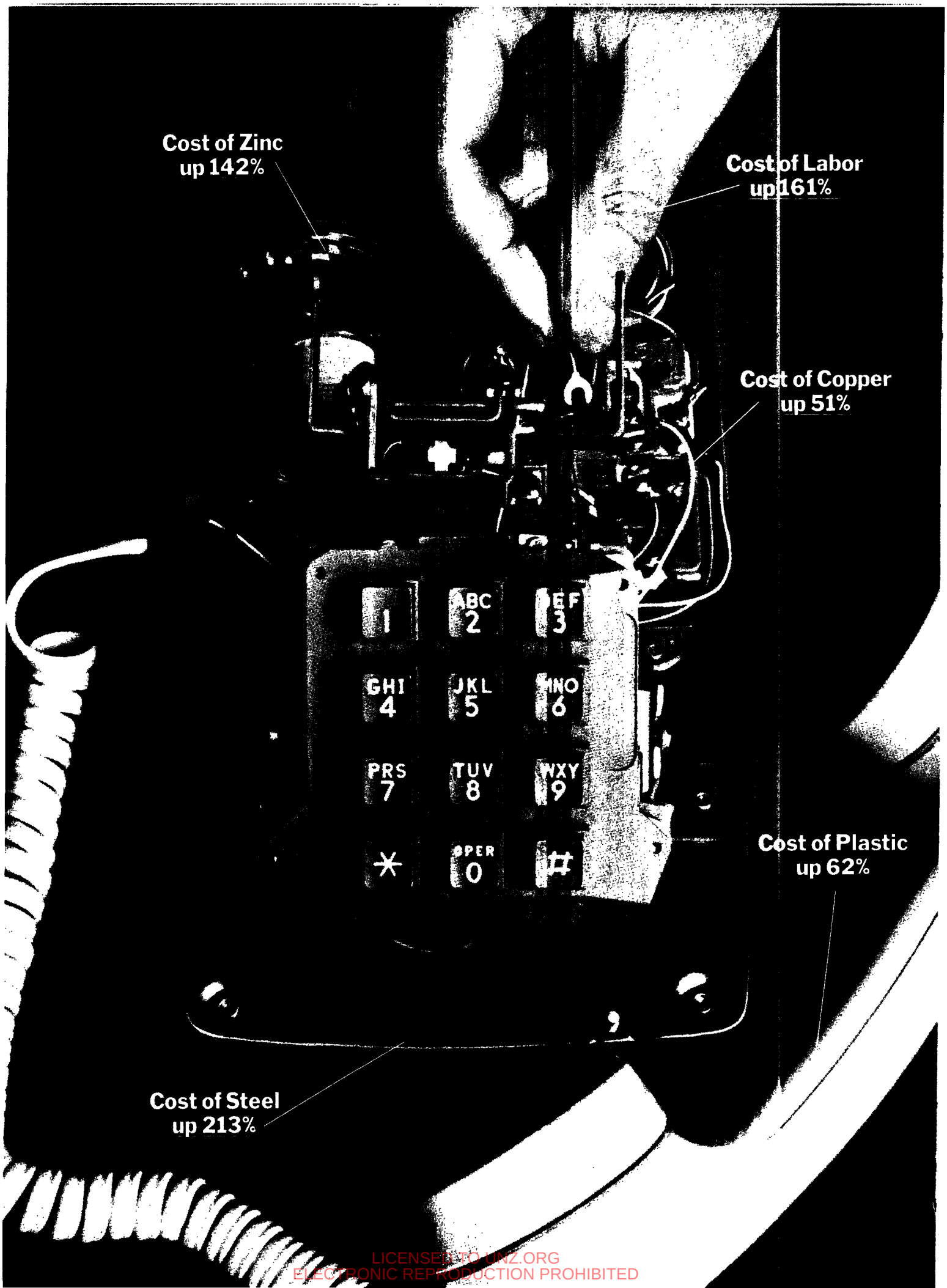

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According to Mr. Laqueur's evidence, President Kekkonen might be characterized as a Communist fellow-traveler. . . . In reality, President Kekkonen has often expressed his faith in the Finnish way of life. He said, for instance, at a luncheon in honor of Nikita Khrushchev on September 4, 1960: "I am convinced that even if all the rest of Europe were to turn Communist, Finland would maintain its traditional Northern democracy if the majority of the Finnish people wants to, as I think it does. . . . The leaders of the Soviet Union know that we will under all circumstances defend our own system because we think it suits us best."

Mr. Laqueur also says in connection with Kekkonen's . . . "confidence-building" policy: "Upon receipt of the Lenin prize, Kekkonen —who is not a Marxist or even a man of the Left—praised Lenin for his great role in granting Finland independence. . . ."

This is what Kekkonen really said in December 1964: "We know that Lenin's significance in the recognition of Finland is decisive; and we shall always keep it in mind gratefully." This statement is entirely correct. Lenin's government was the first to recognize Finnish independence on December 31, 1917, whereas the U.S. and Great Britain did not recognize Finland until May 1919.

The other example Mr. Laqueur cites is taken from a speech which Kekkonen gave to university students in February 1967. In that speech Kekkonen stressed that to discriminate against and isolate some groups in the society, be they Communists or other oppositionists, would turn them against the society itself. Kekkonen said he was convinced that Finnish Communists do not love their native country less than their fellow countrymen. However, he also said that cooperation with the Communists did not mean ceasing to engage them in ideological competition. Kekkonen noted finally that only those who trusted the vitality and strength of their own ideology would dare to embark on such a course.

Nothing could be truer than these words. How could Finland have survived World War II and the subsequent economic struggles if a quarter of its population had been enemies? Why didn't the Communist leaders attempt to turn Finland into a Soviet satellite in 1948, when there were Soviet troops in Porkkala naval base (returned to Finland in 1955) ten miles from Helsinki? Why are there no "Red Brigades" in Finland? . . .

Finland's postwar foreign policy had been sketched out during the war by, among others, President Kekkonen, then a member of parliament. He emphasized in a speech he gave in Stockholm on December 7, 1943 that Finnish entry into an anti-Soviet alliance was out of the question. If Finland joined such an alliance, he said, it would always be an outpost, which in the event of a conflict would be the first to be overrun, yet it would remain powerless to affect the issue of peace and war. Finland should, therefore, according to Kekkonen, create friendly and sincere relations with the Soviet Union, return to neutrality after the war, and continue on its Scandinavian orientation.

It is also erroneous to allege that the Finnish press today has to practice "self-censorship" as the Swedish press did during World War II. The Finnish press is free and the government has no authority over it. . . . The tone in the Finnish press is generally sober toward both the Soviet Union and the United States. The Finnish press, for example, was much more moderate about the American involvement in Vietnam than the Swedish press was. . . .

Mr. Laqueur's knowledge of the period from 1958 to 1966 seems to be slight. He says that the Soviet Union intervened in Finnish politics in 1958 by demanding the resignation of the Social Democratic government, and he continues: "After the 1958 crisis, the Finnish Social Democrats—the biggest party in the country—became eligible to serve in the government only after their old leadership had resigned and the younger leaders had wholeheartedly embraced the Kekkonen line."

To begin with, the biggest party in 1958 was not the Social Democrats, but the Communists. The Social Democratic party had split in 1957 when Väinö Tanner, who had been sentenced to prison at the "War Guilt Trial," was elected party chairman. The Social Democrats lost many seats in both the 1958 and the 1962 elections.

Secondly, the government in 1958 was a coalition of Social Democrats, Agrarians, Conservatives,

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and Liberals. The Soviet Union did not intervene by demanding the resignation of the government. It is true, however, that Tanner's comeback caused deep mistrust in Moscow over the continuity of Finnish neutrality. The Soviet Ambassador left his post, trade talks came to a standstill. When the Agrarian ministers left the government, the coalition collapsed. The next government was an all-Agrarian minority government.

In 1963, the eighty-two-year-old Tanner resigned. Although the new leaders were by no means less patriotic than Tanner, they rejected his clumsy anti-Soviet politics. In the next election in 1966 the Social Democratic party went from 38 to 55 seats (out of 200) and it was again the biggest party. The new government was formed by the Social Democrats in coalition with the Agrarians, the left-wing Socialists, and the Communists (after a break of eighteen years).

In October 1961, the Soviet government sent a note to Finland, invoking the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of 1948 and asking for military consultation on steps to be taken to counteract the threat of German military aggression. The note charged that Denmark and Norway were in danger of becoming accomplices of German militarism. Later, the Finnish Foreign Minister learned in Moscow that the Soviet government was also concerned over the possibility that there might be a change in Finland's foreign policy.

Mr. Laqueur says that the Soviet Union "threatened to invoke the 1948 treaty unless Kekkonen were reelected president." But can the contents of the note be totally dismissed? Did it not reflect the grave tension between East and West on the Berlin question? Did it not reveal Soviet sensitivity to any increase of NATO activity in Scandinavia?

Finland did not wish military talks. In the Finnish view, there was no threat of an attack against Finland or the Soviet Union through Finland; moreover, the Finnish leaders felt such talks would damage Finland's neutrality. Kekkonen also pointed out that military talks would only increase "war psychosis" in Northern Europe. Khrushchev agreed with this point of view and expressed his trust in Kekkonen's ability to continue Finland's policy of neutrality.

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The note crisis was not without impact on Finnish domestic policy. The Soviet leaders did not hide the fact that they thought there was a plot to change Finland's foreign policy in the candidacy of the little known former Chancellor of Justice, Olavi Honka; Honka was sponsored by both Tanner's Social Democrats and the Conservatives. Honka gave up his candidacy when it became known that Kekkonen and Khrushchev had some hours earlier reached agreement in Novosibirsk. The Social Democrats then chose another candidate (Paasio, who became Prime Minister in 1966). In the presidential elections of January 1962, the Communists and the dissident Socialists had their own candidates. The turnout in the election was 81.5 per cent, and Kekkonen was elected with a two-thirds majority.

There are other misinterpretations and errors in Mr. Laqueur's article, but it is impossible to correct all of them in a letter. . . .

Still, it is obvious that Mr. Laqueur's article was not meant to give an impartial picture of Finnish reality. The example of Finland was intended to serve as a warning to West Germany and to other European countries not to create friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Yet I wonder why Mr. Laqueur used such an improper and somehow Victorian term as "Finlandization" instead of "Sovietization." "Finlandization" would make better sense if it had been used to refer to the latter half of the 19th century when Finland first got an independent monetary system, a national army, a regularly-summoned legislature, and the Finnish language was given equal status with Swedish. Before that time, there were no Finnish schools and consequently no Finnish-speaking intellectuals and scarcely any Finnish literature.

ANJA HANSEN
Copenhagen, Denmark

WALTER LAQUEUR writes:

My article, "The Specter of Finlandization," has continued to create agitation in Scandinavia and I am grateful to Anja Hansen for the opportunity to add a postscript. She will forgive me if I dwell only briefly on her observations, which range from the correct (but irrelevant) to the ludicrous (her description of the 1958 crisis). Mrs. Hansen is quite right—the Social Democrats were not the strongest

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party in Finland for a while in 1958, and had indeed split a few months earlier. But what possible bearing does this have on my argument? Mrs. Hansen appears to be more pro-Kekkonen than some of the Finns. (In this connection, an article in the May issue of the Finnish periodical *Kanava,* for example, noted certain imprecisions in my article but went on to add: "In fact, however, Laqueur has met in advance most of the counter-arguments brought up by the Finnish critics.")

Mrs. Hansen is wrong in saying that according to my evidence President Kekkonen could be characterized as a Communist fellow-traveler, or that Sovietization is a more apt term for what I was talking about than Finlandization. It is not a question of Sovietization, and President Kekkonen is not a Communist fellow-traveler. He is a Finnish patriot who believed, up till Stalingrad, that a pro-German orientation was the only possibility for his country and then changed his line in 1943. For no obvious reason Mrs. Hansen quotes a speech made by Kekkonen in Stockholm in late 1943, a speech which was reprinted in Helsinki in 1955 and happens to be readily available. Not wishing to cause any further embarrassment, I shall refrain from quoting what Kekkonen said in this speech about the Russian intention of destroying Finland's independence, about the war of 1941 being only a continuation of the Russian attack of November 1939, and so forth. All that matters in the present context is that Kekkonen in the Stockholm speech sensibly advocated a return to the neutrality policy of 1939. He did not advocate Finnish neutrality 1978-style. Since Mrs. Hansen quotes from old speeches and articles, why not go even further back and quote from articles written by Kekkonen (under the pen name Pekka Peitsi) for the Swedish and Finnish press before the tide turned in World War II? The result could be both illuminating and entertaining.

But the case of President Kekkonen, however interesting, is not really the central issue—after all, he may be replaced by someone more obsequious. Far more important is the general question of appeasement, which I discuss at greater length in my article elsewhere in this issue ["The Psychology of Appeasement," beginning

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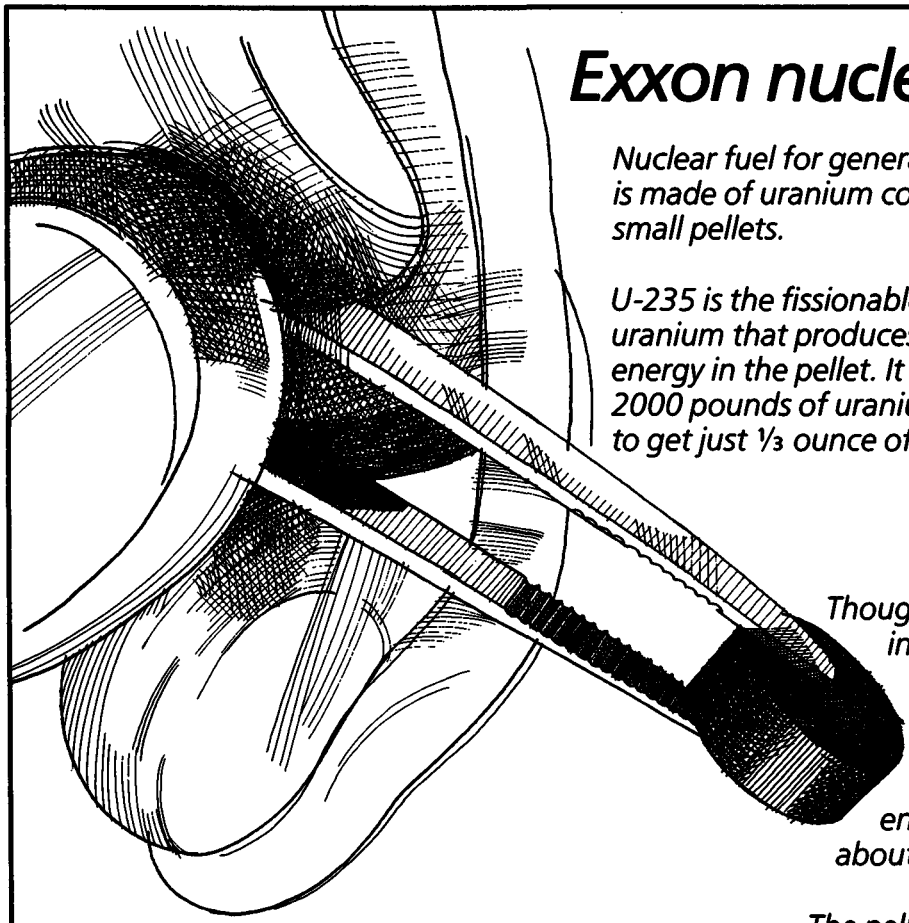

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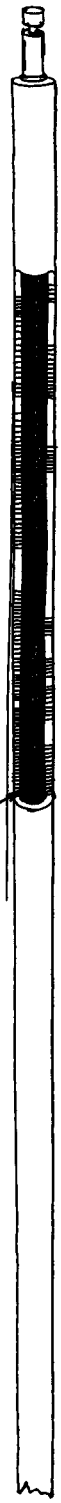

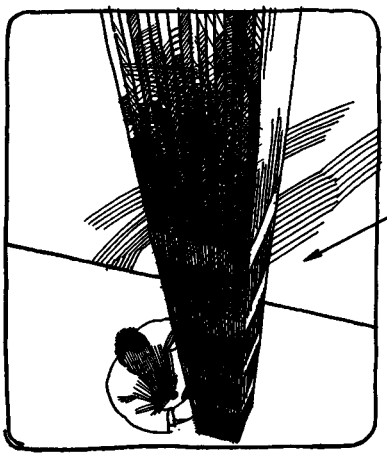

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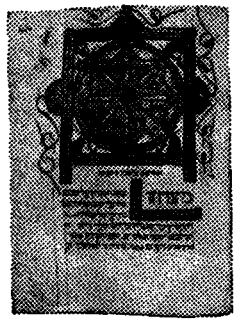

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on p. 44]. Now it is true that a policy of appeasement may be perfectly legitimate for a small country facing a powerful neighbor. But appeasement is (a) frequently carried far beyond what is objectively necessary, and (b) is often advocated not as an unfortunate necessity, but as a panacea for political conflict, and a policy of wisdom, maturity, and responsibility.

What is troubling about Mrs. Hansen's letter is that it is so obviously a case of rationalizing weakness, so typical of a certain strand of political thought in Scandinavia. With all their shortcomings, the Scandinavian societies are among the most civilized the world has known. The absence of fanaticism and brutality are striking, the standards of democratic behavior, of social justice, of honesty and decency, of lack of corruption in public life are unparalleled. And yet these same admirable people who have shown such maturity in arranging their domestic affairs have for generations been the world's most wishful thinkers in foreign affairs. Examples abound: their belief in the League of Nations in the 20's, their trust in Germany's peaceful intentions in the 30's, their doctrine of bridge-building between West and East in the 40's, their faith in the United Nations in the 50's and 60's, and their belief in the Helsinki "Final Act" in the 70's. Could it be perhaps that the very qualities which have made for Scandinavian maturity at home in some way hamper understanding of the world outside? I do not know. But I do know the consequences of this wishful thinking, for the history of Scandinavian appeasement does not begin in the late 50's. Since Mrs. Hansen writes from Denmark, she might have found some excellent illustrations in recent Danish history, such as the case of the Social Democrats and the Radicals in the 30's, who were staunch opponents of Hitler but even stauncher opponents of defending themselves against Hitler. There was Peter Munch, for instance, the leader of the Danish Radicals and Danish Foreign Minister, who loathed the Nazis and everything they stood for. But this did not prevent him from casting his vote against the League of Nations' condemnation of Hitler's rearmament (ineffectual as it was) in 1935, or from voting against sanctions against Nazi Germany in 1936, or from signing a nonaggression pact with Hitler in 1939. There was also Thorwald Stauning, the grand old man of Danish socialism, who was for many years Prime Minister, and a man of great dignity as well as a staunch anti-fascist. But this did not prevent him from succumbing to a Vichy mentality after the Nazi invasion, or from believing that Germany would be Europe's leading power after the war. In the meantime he cooperated with the Germans to make Denmark a model protectorate. These men, and many others like them, were good patriots who sincerely believed there was no other way for their country, and this led them to Finlandization *avant la lettre*.

History has judged them, but memories are short. So we now hear in Mrs. Hansen's letter echoes from the past, expressing concern about "Soviet sensitivity to any increase of NATO activity in Scandinavia," as though we had not been over this ground once before. Views like these are quite prevalent in Scandinavia today. Fortunately, they are not the only views.

Finally, there is one statement in Mrs. Hansen's letter which really cannot be allowed to pass. Mrs. Hansen could have argued that some form of self-censorship in Finland is inevitable, that the whole issue is extremely sensitive and complicated, or even that the American press would not be worse for a little self-censorship. But to say that the Finnish press is free and does not practice self-censorship is simply an untruth. She must know this. Why then does she say it?

Moynihan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I congratulate and commend COMMENTARY for publishing Daniel P. Moynihan's very important and searching article, "Imperial Government" [June]. This should be a boost up for him—to the Presidency of the United States.

HARRY ROSENTHAL
St. Paul, Minnesota

The Middle East

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was surprising in your July issue to find four eminent political scientists with diverse points of view on the Middle East each arriving at the conclusion that Israel

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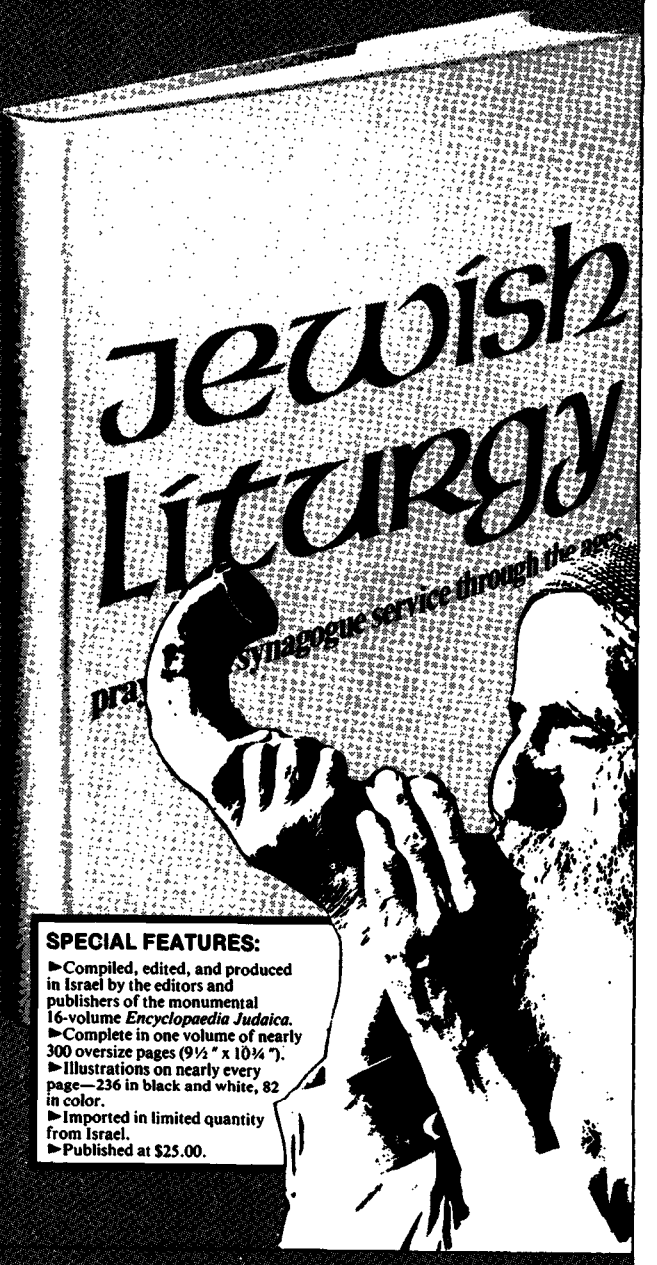

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will have to be more forthcoming for progress to take place ["Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?": "The Role of the United States" by Robert W. Tucker; "The View from Tel Aviv" by Walter Laqueur; "The Egyptian Perspective" by Bernard Lewis; "A Skeptical View" by Steven J. Rosen]. Even Mr. Rosen, whose analysis is avowedly the most skeptical, . . . falls into the trap of assuming that there were opportunities for real negotiations during the last decade, but the Israelis did not take the initiative. . . .

The truth is that the conditions for real peace negotiations do not now exist and have not existed since the beginning of the conflict . . . because the Arab leaders, including Sadat, have not yet accepted the *moral legitimacy* of a Jewish (Zionist) state in the Middle East. Sadat and some others seem to have accepted the *fact* of Israel, and Sadat has even said the Jews are now welcome there, but he has also said through his press and to his fellow Arabs that Israel must divest itself of Zionism and even of Jewishness, which really means its corporate existence as a sovereign people. All of these concepts are implicit (and some are explicit) even in the Knesset speech and in Sadat's domestic statements in Egypt. . . .

As yet no Arab leader has accepted the right of Israel to live as a Jewish (Zionist) state. All have endorsed the UN resolution condemning Zionism as racism, all have signed the Rabat agreement endorsing the PLO, whose covenant expressly denies the right of existence of a Jewish (Zionist) state and prescribes a violent physical struggle leading to the elimination of that state. Thus, to interpret Sadat's personally courageous and politically astute gesture as the fulfillment of what is meant by face-to-face negotiations is to fail to see the forest for the trees.

One may ask why it is that most Israeli politicians have failed to enunciate at every opportunity that Israel is a Jewish (Zionist) state and that its very *raison d'être* is Zionism. Perhaps it is because Israeli leaders . . . have succumbed to the typical Diaspora response to anti-Semitism: keep quiet about the basic issue and try to arrive at some *modus vivendi*. But real peace requires confronting this basic issue fully. . . .

It is up to those who see the real picture to urge American leaders (and those of the West) to persuade their Arab friends that the real peace process can begin only with the acceptance of the moral legitimacy of the Jewish (Zionist) state of Israel as the rightful homeland of the Jews. Only then will face-to-face negotiations have meaning and substance.

OSCAR MILLER
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

The Catacombs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In view of the many letters elicited by Michael Ledeen's article last year on the Jewish catacombs of Italy ["The Unknown Catacombs," September 1977], I thought your readers would be interested in what has happened since.

As Mr. Ledeen pointed out in his article, the Villa Torlonia, site of one of the oldest and most important Jewish catacombs in Italy, has recently been converted from a private estate into a public park. With this transformation it had been hoped—in spite of rumors to the contrary—that the Jewish catacombs, after being hidden for centuries from public view, would finally be made accessible to viewers. When the new park finally opened on July 19, and the first visitors reached the site, they met with disappointment. The ancient stairway leading into the catacombs had been buried—supposedly, to guard the site against vandalism—and along with it, for an indeterminate period, the dream of free access to this important Jewish archeological site. . . .

Thus, this ancient Jewish catacomb, which contains in its frescoed cubicula unique treasures of Jewish art and sepulchral architecture and in its galleries the remains of a priceless archive of inscriptions illuminating the first chapter not only of Italian but of Western Jewish history, remains a kind of imprisoned witness from the Roman era before Christianity. It testifies to a time when Jews and Judaism were fully recognized and protected by the laws of Rome and when the young church, according to Tertullian, lived and expanded "under the shadow of the most eminent and recognized Jewish religion."

The Torlonia catacomb seems to be sharing in the tragic fate of the other Roman Jewish catacombs which were discovered during the last century only to be destroyed or lost again . . . as a result of prejudice, vandalism, land speculation, and last but not least . . . the complete failure of Jewish authorities to take the initiative in attempting to preserve these ancient monuments, recently described by Yigael Yadin as "the most important remains of the Jewish antiquity in the Diaspora."

Optimists here believe that once the new state-church concordat currently being negotiated is ratified, the way will be cleared at last for study of the Torlonia catacomb; but pessimists say that once buried it will remain so for a long time to come. There is no question, however, that much will depend on whether decisions taken by the World Jewish Congress in its meeting of November 1977 and by the Congress of Italian Jewish Communities last June can be implemented. Both these meetings set forth guidelines aimed at constructive collaboration between the responsible Italian authorities and the Jewish world for the purpose of "safeguarding, preserving, and exploring the Jewish catacombs in Italy and making them accessible to scientific research and to the public."

Since the study of the Jewish catacombs . . . evidently touches on problems of the ancient Jewish-Christian relationship, one may justly hope that the new attitude of the Catholic Church, expressed in various post-conciliar declarations and aiming at a new understanding of the Jews and at a deeper knowledge of Jewish history and culture (of which the catacombs are an integral part) will prevail also in the field of Christian archeology.

Only with such a new approach, free of past bias, can archeology, and Christian archeology in particular, contribute to filling in the missing pieces of the puzzle and thereby reconstructing the full picture of Jewish life within the grand mosaic of the ancient Mediterranean world.

HENRYK Z. GELLER
Rome, Italy

Correction

In Ruth R. Wisse's article, "The Anxious American Jew" [September], an error occurred in the last sentence on p. 49. The sentence should read: "Having presented the news, the *Times* then congratulated the group editorially for its 'courage.'"

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Against the China Card

Edward N. Luttwak

IN THE four Soviet "military districts" bordering on China, and in the Soviet client-state of Outer Mongolia, there are now deployed at least forty-three army divisions, out of a grand total of 168 in the Soviet army as a whole; there are also some 100,000 heavily armed border troops, elite forces of the KGB. In all, more than one-quarter of Soviet ground troops, as well as about one-fifth of the Soviet tactical airforce, are deployed against China.

The military balance in Europe, such as it is, already depends on the hostility between the Soviet Union and China, which offsets in great part the uneven competition between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Precarious as the equilibrium of forces in Europe undoubtedly is, it would be altogether overthrown if the Soviet Union were to diminish its forces on the Chinese border down to the numbers of the pre-1969 period, when no more than fifteen divisions manned the frontier now guarded by forty-three. By contrast, in the whole of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union holds only thirty-one divisions (albeit at full strength), and these divisions daily earn their keep in a way that the forces on the Chinese border do not: they serve the Kremlin's political purposes by insuring the obedience of the East Europeans while simultaneously projecting power into Western Europe. No such political benefits are gained by the Soviet troops deployed against China.

But crude divisional counts hardly reveal the full dimensions of the military burden which China levies upon the Soviet Union. During the great build-up of the 1968-72 period, Soviet forces were at first sent out to the border areas with all the urgency with which troops are moved in a war: the soldiers had to live in field conditions, often in harsh circumstances, and their supplies were precariously conveyed. Had war broken out in the wake of the 1969 border incidents, as some hoped and others feared, the Soviet Union might well have suffered a characteristically Russian logistic defeat, before being able to inflict an equally characteristic technological defeat upon the Chinese. Many of the routes that linked Soviet encampments with the Trans-Siberian railway were unpaved tracks, fit for use by heavy trucks only in high summer and during the winter freeze; emergency airlifts would also have depended on landing strips usable only in good weather. Nor could the Russians accumulate the fuel dumps, ammunition stores, and stocks of essential supplies that would have been needed to bridge the gap between wartime consumption rates and the restricted capacity of their jerry-built supply network—which in any case was almost entirely dependent on the highly vulnerable Trans-Siberian railway. Beyond that, Soviet forces newly deployed on the Chinese border lacked the whole complex of facilities and repair shops needed to maintain the efficiency of their thousands of tanks, troop carriers, and guns. Perhaps the Soviet soldier is still a hardy creature who can survive and fight with very little in the Siberian cold and in the summer heat of the Mongolian steppe. But even if the comforts of the men could be denied, the needs of their equipment could not: late-model Soviet weapons are as complex and delicate as those of the most pampered of Western armies.

Although the number of divisions has ceased to grow since 1972, the effort expended by the Soviet Union on the Chinese border has increased very greatly since then. There has been vast construction, of bases and airfields, of workshops and hospitals, of roads and depots—often with materials brought at great cost from afar. This entire infrastructure is still now being equipped with the great mass of things needed to achieve self-sufficiency in places thousands of miles removed from European Russia; from electronic gear to hospital beds, from machine tools to washing machines, all must come from the industrial core areas. On top of all this, there is the additional cost of the Baikal-Amur railway now under construction, no doubt primarily for military reasons. Since it runs 200 miles or more to the north of the Trans-Siberian, the new rail link will offer greater safety from Chinese sabotage or outright attack; for the very same reason, its construction costs are enormous: the line

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must cross zones of permafrost where each culvert and bridge, and the very roadbed itself, must all be carefully secured with elaborate precautions.

Far and away the most costly single construction project now under way anywhere in the world, the railway is nevertheless a good investment: with distances of up to 6,000 miles from the core areas of European Russia, even the airlift capacity of both the Soviet air force and Aeroflot could scarcely provide the flow of supplies that would be needed in war. As for shipping, the choice is between the short northern route by way of the Arctic, usable only briefly in high summer and then with icebreakers, and the enormously long and easily interrupted sea lanes that connect the Baltic and Black Seas with the Soviet ports on the northeast Pacific by way of the Indian Ocean. In a war, this uniquely unfavorable geography would be the great equalizer between poorly armed Chinese and exceedingly well-equipped Russians, and it is also the great inflator of costs in peace. The enormity of maintaining a large army at the other end of the world is evident: while American forces in Europe have a maritime supply line some 3,500 miles long across the Atlantic, the shortest sea route from the Black Sea to Vladivostock exceeds 9,500 miles, and when the Suez Canal cannot be used, it exceeds 16,000 miles.

These, then, are the dimensions of the indirect strategic benefit that the hostility between the Russians and Chinese already confers upon the West. Whether or not all the true resource costs emerge through the fog of Soviet accounting methods, these costs are real all the same. To the extent that they figure as *military* outlays, they must ultimately restrict the effort channeled into the military competition between the Russians and the West. For it is by now generally agreed that the Soviet armed forces claim for themselves a fixed proportion of the gross national product. Accordingly, the Soviet military resources absorbed by the confrontation with China must be reckoned as withdrawn from the competition with the West.

A PRUDENT strategy would not lightly accept this state of affairs. In the free benefit that the Russo-Chinese confrontation confers upon us, there is a great dependence, and therefore a great risk. As things now stand, a diplomatic adjustment between Moscow and Peking could quite suddenly undermine the military balance in Europe and beyond, by freeing some of the Soviet forces now held in Asia for redeployment against NATO.

Both Sovietologists and Sinologists assure us that the hostility between Russians and Chinese is deeply rooted and many-faceted, being cultural-historical and also territorial as well as ideological. But there is no need to disagree with the experts in order to fear the worst. We may agree that a reconciliation of souls is entirely improbable. But even the most guarded and tactical of détentes might suffice to bring about a mutual force-reduction agreement on the Russo-Chinese border, and that in turn could easily release Soviet forces sufficiently powerful to undermine the already precarious equilibrium between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Since the processes of decision in both Moscow and Peking are so secretive, and thus eminently well-suited to the diplomacy of surprise, the danger of a sudden accord is always present, and we should not dismiss it as lightly as many now do.

But prudence seems to be out of fashion. No calls to reduce our strategic dependence on the Russo-Chinese rivalry are to be heard. Instead, there are insistent voices that argue for a much more active exploitation of this rivalry. From Senator Jackson and others in opposition and from some in high office in the current administration, we hear that the United States should play the "China card." The phrase is opaque, but the intended meaning is clear enough.

The premises of the argument are incontestable: the hopes of the Kissingerian détente have now been exposed as vain; the Soviet Union, obdurately bent on achieving a broad military superiority, is steadily advancing over the West in one category of forces after another, and is already acting in a seriously disruptive fashion abroad while being more than usually nasty at home. As for the strategic-arms limitation negotiations, they have already failed in substance, whatever the formal outcome, since even the most ardent advocates of a new SALT treaty now concede that it will not preserve strategic stability—and that of course is the only valid goal of the exercise.

The argument developed from these premises also has an undeniable plausibility. Having tried our best to reach a stable accord with the Soviet Union, we must now face the brutal fact that we have failed—perhaps because our well-meaning intent has been mistaken for weakness, or perhaps because our weakness is all too real. Now, the argument continues, we must move to apply real pressure on the Russians, in order to force them into the mutually beneficial accommodation which they so obstinately refuse. This can best be done by strengthening China. To the extent that China's relative power increases vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the Russians will be forced to divert still more of their power to the East, and will therefore have to moderate their conduct in the West, and also refrain from adventures in Africa and elsewhere. A harder variant of the argument does not merely seek to engineer an improved *modus vivendi* with the Russians, but rather hopes to achieve a more definite solution, by mobilizing Chinese power to the point where the Russians will be reduced to paralysis on all other fronts.

Beyond this, the "China Card" argument diverges into different prescriptions. One school of

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thought stresses the military dimension, and some already advocate the outright supply of American weapons and production know-how to the Chinese. Again, the underlying military logic is sound: American forces are manpower-limited, while those of China are equipment-limited. A given stock of modern weapons added to American inventories can yield only a marginal increase in capability, while the same weapons, if supplied to the Chinese, could have a multiplied effect. In one frequently cited example, it is argued that many Chinese infantry divisions could be made fit for combat against Soviet armored forces at a modest cost, if supplied with anti-tank missiles. As it happens, this is not true, for elementary tactical reasons (artillery can easily suppress anti-tank missiles), but the flawed example does not vitiate the argument: it is certainly true that the vast potential of Chinese military power is now severely limited by certain narrow deficiencies which reflect the inadequacies of the Chinese industrial base. In some cases at least, these shortcomings could be remedied fairly easily with Western help.

For example, the Chinese have a large number of old but still useful jet fighters; their great weakness is that they lack air-to-air missiles. A supply of these relatively cheap munitions could go a long way toward improving the air balance with the Soviet Union. Given a greater effort, with the supply of some modern jet fighters (as well as many more missiles), the Chinese might be able to offer a real challenge to the Soviet Union's air superiority in the border areas, and this in turn would activate the much larger capability of the Chinese ground forces, now virtually neutralized by their utter vulnerability to Soviet air power. In this way, a relatively modest contribution of advanced weaponry from the United States could generate a disproportionate increase in overall Chinese military power, thus triggering the cycle of Soviet redeployment to the East, and retrenchment in the West.

Others who also see the "Chinese card" in a military vein would have us refrain from direct supply, leaving the task—or rather the market—to the Europeans. The United States has in fact already acted on this advice: the jet engines of current first-line Chinese fighters are now being produced in a factory which was equipped by the British, with American permission (some of the technology originated in the United States).

ANOTHER school of thought is perhaps more influential: it does not necessarily exclude the supply of military equipment but prefers to stress diplomatic means. It calls for a rapid "normalization" of U.S. relations with China—characteristically accepting Peking's terminology in which it is "normal" that diplomatic relations should require the prior abandonment of our defense treaty with Taiwan and the withdrawal of recognition from the Chinese government on that island. In the "diplomatic" formulation of the argument, the aim is not to apply direct military pressure on the Soviet Union and there is no compelling mechanical logic at work. Instead, the claim is that if the leaders of Moscow were confronted by a pattern of close and harmonious dealings between Washington and Peking, they would feel compelled to redress the balance. This in turn would require them to soften their policies toward the West, in order to compete with the amity that Peking already offers.

There is also an economic school of thought, which advocates the liberalization of trade and technology transfers to China, with or without full diplomatic relations, and even in the absence of outright sales of military equipment. The expectation is that Chinese industrial progress would accelerate rapidly, with a consequent increase in the ultimate military potential that the Chinese economy could sustain. In this formulation, the Russians would be driven to seek an accord with Washington in the hope of arresting the flow of advanced technology, or at least in order to position themselves for a future in which China would become much more powerful.

Both the diplomatic and the economic versions of the "China card" argument have collateral attractions that owe very little to the essential strategic logic of the argument. Their advocates have thus been fairly effective in building coalitions with those who are interested in the chosen instrument even if indifferent—or even hostile—to the strategic purpose. For example, there is a group, amply represented in the current administration, whose members are eager to abandon Taiwan, but not at all interested in opposing the Soviet Union more strongly. Some in this camp are academic Sinologists, who simply believe in Peking's claim that the continued existence of a separate government on Taiwan amounts to a perpetuation of the Chinese civil war; often motivated by a sense of guilt over the Western exploitation of Chinese weakness in the past, these men feel very strongly that the United States is helping to divide the Chinese by maintaining diplomatic relations with Taiwan and continuing to guarantee its security. Oddly enough for experts in Chinese history, they accept the pretense that there is only one China, even though in the reality of history China has more often been divided than united. As good Sinophiles, many seem much more concerned with Peking's sensitivities than with those of Washington, and are notably indifferent to the harsh price in credibility, prestige, and self-regard that the United States would have to pay if it were to abandon the longstanding alliance with Taiwan.

Others motivated primarily by the urge to repudiate Taiwan are not driven by the scholarly provincialism of the pro-Peking Sinologists, but

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rather by deeper and darker emotions. As a residue of the travails of the Indochina war, we now have among our foreign-policy elite some who can see virtue only in those who scorn our values and reject our mode of life. These are men and women who hold it terribly urgent to achieve amity with Hanoi and Havana, and who automatically assume that any American-oriented regime in the Third World must be corrupt and unworthy—for who but the corrupt would want to emulate our ways, or seek the friendship of an America itself corrupt and unjust? Some who hold such views are now in high and relevant office. With some impatience these officials may pay attention to Japan or Korea, countries clearly too important to be denied, but they have no time at all for the Singapores or Taiwans of this world; their conversation will frequently refer in excited tones to their dealings with Vietnamese or Cubans, but the extraordinary progress achieved by the laissez-faire economies of East Asia leaves them indifferent. The fact that living standards have risen so swiftly from abject poverty to a modest prosperity, the fact that these nations are vibrant in their dynamism, does not attract their praise; nor do they appreciate the pro-American orientation of these countries—indeed it is that above all which ultimately condemns them.

Neither the pro-Peking Sinologists nor those whom we may as well call McGovernites truly support the geopolitical aim of the "China card" strategy; in fact, in the policy debate the McGovernites are prominent in their belief that the Russians should not be pressured but rather conciliated further. But both groups are content to join the coalition, as the best way of securing the abandonment of Taiwan, a goal which they pursue with peculiar intensity.

Needless to say, the wider coalition built around the economic version of the argument represents a variety of business interests. Very few of our corporate executives are sufficiently naive to see a vast consumer market in China: Lancashire may have once believed that the world's demand for its cotton goods would be doubled if only the Chinese could be persuaded to lengthen their coats by a couple of inches, but it is all too obvious that the United States has long ceased to be competitive as a supplier of cottons or any other simple consumer good. But, given Peking's new willingness to trade, there is certainly a significant potential market for American industrial machinery and all the ancillaries, from computers to heavy vehicles.

And then of course there are the oil companies. Contrary to popular belief, the attention of oil executives is not entirely absorbed by the exacting business of lobbying for fiscal advantage, or conspiring to fix prices; the oil companies do retain an interest in finding oil and gas. Some years ago much was heard about China's supposedly vast offshore oil deposits, but very little was known in fact. The claim that there was "big oil" in the sea reflected highly superficial evidence: the geology is *compatible* with oil deposits; it does not guarantee their presence. Not much more is known now, but given the chance, quite a few U.S. oil companies would be willing to spend millions to explore. Thus their powerful voice is added to the industrial interest which sees a potential market in China.

One does not expect to find strategic wisdom among McGovernites, or pro-Peking Sinologists, and still less is it due from businessmen in search of more business. As for the government officials who are now the chief advocates of the "China card," their motives may be properly strategic rather than sentimental, ideological, or commercial, but these men are after all among the chief makers of the Carter administration's inept foreign policy, and perhaps one should not expect much from them either. By contrast, it is disheartening to discover that some of our most accomplished strategists have now joined in the call for a de-facto alliance with China, explicitly suggesting that this should be a military alliance.

It seems that after all the years of our troubles with the Soviet Union a transference of purposes has taken place, from the positive of preserving Western security to the negative of opposing the Soviet Union. It is of course true that the Soviet Union remains by far the most powerful of our adversaries, and there is every reason to believe that this will be true in the future also. Nor can one disagree with the contention that it is now a matter of high urgency to muster additional strength to oppose the steady course of power-accumulation which the Soviet Union has followed for fifteen years and more. Finally, one may agree also that the West is in fact losing the military competition, and that a strategic remedy is now needed. But the "China card" is the most unstrategical of remedies, being rather a tactical "quick-fix" writ large. Only its unpremeditated consequences will be strategic in import—and exceedingly unfavorable.

There is no point in engaging in a preliminary argument over the willingness of the Chinese to cooperate in the scheme. Until Mao's death it was the position of the Chinese leaders that they needed no technological know-how from the outside world, that they would trade no raw material for industrial imports, and that in weapons China would be strictly self-sufficient. Now Peking's policies appear to have been reversed on all these points. There can be no reliable prediction of what the Chinese might do with an enhancement of their military power, but at present they are certainly willing to receive Western help in industrial and military-industrial technology—though no purchases of actual military equipment

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appear to have taken place as yet. As for Peking's willingness to cooperate on a purely diplomatic level, we have now only the promise that after "normalization," much can be expected. It should be noted that others who do have full diplomatic relations, such as the British, privately complain that there is still no real diplomatic intercourse with the Chinese, and that their embassy in Peking transacts very little real business. But one may suppress doubt on all these points and proceed to assume with the advocates that China would in fact be willing to cooperate, since a Chinese refusal would dispose of the whole "China card" argument in any case.

The problems, then, arise from the consequences of the move, and not from its feasibility. It is the essence of strategy to evaluate choices in the knowledge that each move will trigger a reaction, and that the net accounting of results must include not only what we do, but also what others will do in order to counter our own actions. The first consequence of our playing the "China card" may be predicted, at least in general terms, with great certainty: if we act, the Soviet Union will react. How? If the Russians were to decide that the threat of a Sino-American alliance was not merely ominous in its long-term consequences but also dangerous in the short-term, they might be driven to use force against China. It is of course most unlikely that the leaders in the Kremlin would become sufficiently desperate to resort to a nuclear attack or to a full-scale invasion, but the broad military superiority of the Soviet Union in both conventional and nuclear forces, on land, at sea, and in the air offers a whole repertoire of military moves which China could neither defeat nor deter.

The possibilities are many, and there would be no point in examining each. But it is instructive to examine one or two of the alternatives. To take one large option, the Soviet Union might launch a limited offensive to seize territory in some part of the vast border lands of China where the population is small, non-Chinese, or both. For example, the western province of Sinkiang, already half surrounded by Soviet territory, is as large as one-third of the United States but its population does not exceed twenty million—half of them being minorities of Turkic stock, and by all accounts extremely unhappy with Peking's rule. A conquest of Sinkiang would be a straightforward military operation for which the highly mobile Soviet armored forces would be eminently well-suited, and the Russians would have little to fear from guerrillas in a land of deserts which has neither the jungles nor the men which made Vietnam so irreducible. As for Chinese nuclear retaliation, this would be inhibited by the great imbalance of forces: in a nuclear exchange all Chinese cities of any size would unfailingly be destroyed. And finally, the Soviet Union could mitigate even the international political costs, by claiming (with merit) that the peoples of the Sinkiang were in need of liberation from Chinese colonial rule. The outcome might then be the creation of a Turkestan People's Republic, a client-state on the lines of Outer Mongolia, whose existence already so well serves the interests of Russia while diminishing China.

But the major purpose of a Sinkiang move would be achieved in the process rather than in the actual result: the Peking regime would be undermined internally by the exposure of its military inadequacy, and the American alliance would be shown to be hollow. Indeed, that particular aim could also be achieved (with much less risk) by a far more restrained use of Soviet military forces. Should a pattern of orchestrated border incidents and other threatening moves induce the Chinese to seek urgent help in materiel, they would then discover that the total number of battle tanks, guns, and anti-aircraft weapons that the United States could promptly supply would not suffice to equip more than one or two of their 190 divisions. In fact, even the total inventory of American ground weapons of the army and marines, of the active forces and reserves, would not be enough to equip half the Chinese army with modern weapons.

OTHER Russian moves might also involve force but less directly. For example, the Soviet Union might sponsor a North Korean invasion of the South. By all accounts, the ruler of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, would need very little encouragement. If a second Korean war were to break out, the military outcome would be in doubt, but one may safely predict the political consequences: if Peking joined in support of the North, this would destroy the American alliance, since U.S. troops would then find themselves engaged in combat against an enemy supported, if only verbally, by the Chinese. In such circumstances, the United States could hardly maintain harmonious diplomatic and trade relations with Peking; still less could American weapons continue to be supplied to the patron and ally of an enemy.

Alternatively, if Peking remained neutral, it would lose all influence over North Korea, Soviet troops would then no doubt be stationed in that country, and this alone would greatly weaken China: the very important Manchurian provinces would then be surrounded by Soviet forces on three sides. Further, if Peking suffered this great loss in order to stay neutral, it would then expect the United States to act swiftly to defeat a Russian-supported invasion. But any Korean war would create a world crisis and NATO would also be calling for reinforcements; in such circumstances, the United States with its diminished forces could not send a powerful army to Korea. Thus, instead of a prompt and clear American victory, a messy hold-

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ing action would ensue. Peking would then discover how severe are the limits on American power that Soviet military efforts and American parsimony have jointly imposed. This too would be apt to lead to a breakdown of the alliance, since the Chinese would then see greater safety in conciliating a powerful Soviet Union than in continuing to rely on a weak American ally.

There is no need to evoke every conceivable war scenario, for the same lesson emerges in each case: far from being a *substitute* for American strength, the "China card" would require a prior augmentation of American military power as the essential precondition of so risky a move. Otherwise, a violent Soviet reaction could not be reliably deterred, nor defeated. This of course makes nonsense of the whole scheme. That the military logic of the "China card" is ultimately self-defeating should not after all come as a surprise: given the present balance of power, the relative strength of the United States can scarcely be expected to increase through an alliance with a China that is altogether more vulnerable to Soviet attack than the United States could ever be.

A warlike Soviet reaction would be highly dangerous, but it is not the only response available to the Russians. Indeed, they might inflict still greater damage upon the West if they were to follow the ways of peace. What would happen if we carried out the scheme, and there was no prompt Russian military reaction? Through the importation of industrial equipment, of military technology, or of actual weapons, the Chinese would eventually become stronger; it is then envisaged that the Russians would allocate more and more of their military power to their eastern frontier. The nations of Western Europe would then, no doubt, diminish *their* military effort; in the face of a decline in the Soviet forces ranged directly against them, the parliaments of Europe would hardly refrain from cutting military budgets, and Congress would no doubt follow.

But as the process unfolds, it holds the seeds of its own unmaking. For the incentives to the Soviet Union of reaching a *modus vivendi* with China would grow in proportion to the rising costs of a continued confrontation. Peking would then be in a position to blackmail the West for still more aid, threatening to go to Moscow if its demands were not met. The Russians in turn would find it profitable to offer still greater inducements in exchange for a détente. At some point, the Chinese might well see an advantage in accepting the Soviet offer; détente and force-reduction agreements would ensue, and the Russians would next be free to transfer to the West a sufficient proportion of their forces in Asia to undermine drastically the European military balance. China, for its part, would be free to use its own military power against Taiwan, and to intimidate any other Western-oriented country in East Asia. The profound antipathy between Russians and Chinese would not invalidate this scenario. The Russo-Chinese conflict may indeed be organic, and incapable of ultimate resolution. Nevertheless, each side may yet deem it appropriate to reach a temporary accommodation, in order to build up its own strength for the final showdown by conquest and expansion at the expense of the West.

SO FAR, the "China card" has been considered on its own terms, in the essentially tactical and short-term perspective of its proponents. But in contemplating such a momentous course of action, of such powerful effect, even the most feckless ought to consider the long-term consequences. What is the long-term goal of our policy toward the Soviet Union? We may all agree that in the immediate future we must act strongly to remedy the imbalance of power which our years of military decay and political confusion have caused. We may also agree that it is necessary to contain Soviet imperialism much more effectively than we have done of late. But what then? Is it our purpose, through a Chinese alliance, to drive the Russians into a corner of isolation and hostility, or even to conspire in their destruction? Or should, rather, our purpose be to encourage the peaceful transformation of the Soviet Union toward a more tolerable internal order and a more responsible external conduct?

Surely our long-term goal must be to achieve a gradual Europeanization of the Russians, through the spread of legality, the widening of individual freedoms, and the democratization of party and state. Already there is legalism, even if not at all the rule of law; at present, the procedures have little substance, as the recent trials have shown. But even this modest restraint upon despotism was entirely absent in Stalin's day, when dissidents were simply shot in police cells. Our hope must be that legalism will evolve into legality through its own dynamic. But this result could hardly be expected in a Soviet Union isolated, and embattled against a Chinese military power enhanced by Western assistance. Already there has been some widening of individual freedoms; even with the recent retrogressions, these freedoms are much wider than they were thirty years ago, when indeed Russians were as unfree as man may become outside prison walls. Here our aim must be to encourage a reversion to the modest but encouraging liberalization of the early 1960's, and then to stimulate progress yery much further. In this case also, rising military tensions would defeat our purpose, and serve to promote a further restoration of the powers of the KGB. As for democratization, in truth there are no grounds for rational hope in this direction, even within the confines of the party, let alone the state, but we must hope nevertheless, and we should not preclude our own intent by adopting a strategy of encirclement that

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would serve to justify the disciplines of autocracy.

And what of our long-term policy toward China? Is it our true purpose to promote the rise of the People's Republic to superpower status? The Chinese are perhaps more pacific a people than the Russians have been over the last two centuries or so, and of course they are wonderfully talented, and have much to contribute in all ways. To the extent that totalitarian controls allow, even in mainland China a Westerner may enjoy an improvement of his culture and a betterment of his manners by mere contact with the Chinese. But should we become the artificers of a great power which our grandchildren may have to contend with? Will they be grateful if we help to make China more powerful than it would be in the natural way of things? One thinks not.

By all means, then, achieve diplomatic relations with Peking—so long as these are obtained in equality, without any imposed diminution of our highly productive relations with Taiwan. Even the supply of military-industrial technology from Europe must be seriously considered, but only in very modest proportions, to reduce specific Chinese vulnerability to Soviet coercion. Beyond that, however, the "China card" should not be played. Instead, we should play the American card, mustering more of our own strength for our own purposes.

There is no strategy without a coherent political purpose, and for the United States there can be no political purpose on the world scene that fails to reflect our moral aims. It is obvious that at the very least these aims are utterly inconsistent with totalitarianism, and thus, of course, with Communism. Ultimately it would avail us little to resist one form of Communism by aiding another. The "China card" has all the appeal of a free lunch, but in strategy, as in economics, there is no such thing. In this particular case, the attempt to derive a free benefit from Chinese strength in order to spare ourselves efforts which we are very well equipped to make, would fatally compromise not only our strategic position but also our most fundamental political purposes.

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The Psychology of Appeasement

Walter Laqueur

EVERY historical situation is unique, but now and then an event recalls the past with such force that comparisons become inevitable. Thus, Robert J. Kane, president of the American Olympic Committee, answering appeals to boycott the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980, has recently objected to what he calls "the intrusion of politics in the Olympics." "We view the current issue of human rights as one of a political nature, not one of sports." Mr. Kane's main interest, one assumes, is athletics, and it would be unfair to make heavy weather of his statement. Indeed, there is something to be said for his view. For the Soviet leadership, human rights *are* a political issue (although so, for that matter, are sports). If we were to begin applying political criteria, moreover, U.S. athletes would have to withdraw from most international competitions. Then too, although Mr. Kane did not say so, from a strictly political point of view there may actually be arguments, albeit not very strong ones, *in favor* of U.S. participation in the Moscow games.

The whole issue is of considerable interest because more than forty years ago the very same debate took place, and the same arguments were used, based on the same misconceptions. In 1931 it was decided that Berlin would be the venue of the Olympic games of 1936. But then Hitler came to power and it was said that neither German nor foreign Jews would be permitted to participate. American sports organizers and also some Europeans put pressure on the Nazis, who then announced that they would waive restrictions on "non-Aryans." Eventually one Jew, an ice-hockey player, was permitted to represent Germany in the winter Olympics in Garmisch, and a fencer, Helene Mayer, in the summer games. According to the Nuremberg laws, Miss Mayer was "half-Aryan" anyway. A former Olympic champion (Amsterdam, 1928), she was also a great patriot who was, she said, proud to fence for her country again. Still, she had to be satisfied with a bronze medal; a Hungarian Jewish girl named Ilona Schacherer took the gold.

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These German concessions were not deemed sufficient by many leading figures in American sports. For even if the Nazis incorporated a Jew (and a half) in their team to prove their good will, it could hardly be claimed that they were living up to their obligations to conform with the Olympic spirit ("a school of moral nobility and purity") and the Olympic code, with its emphasis on the spirit of chivalry and fair play. How could a Jewish athlete possibly prepare for a competition of such magnitude if all the race tracks of Germany, all the swimming pools, all the playing fields were closed to him, not to mention the fact that he might be denied the use of public transport, attacked in the street, or perhaps even put into a concentration camp? And to top it all off, the Nazis had made it abundantly clear that they considered sports an integral part of the Nazi ideology and practice, and especially of propaganda —to show the superiority of the Third Reich over the decadent West.

Among the Americans who suggested that their country should boycott the Olympics were leaders of the American Federation of Labor; such figures as Damon Runyon, Paul Gallico, and Westbrook Pegler; civic leaders like Al Smith and Hugh Johnson; and many important athletes of the day. Their chief was Judge Jeremiah T. Mahoney, a pugnacious Irishman and president of the influential Amateur Athletic Union, who noted, quite correctly, that not only Jews but also Protestants and Catholic sportsmen were discriminated against in Germany and that the Nazis, generally speaking, were engaged in the Nazification of the Olympic games on a large scale. These opponents established the "Committee for Fair Play in Sports."

The counterattack was led by Avery Brundage, a wealthy Chicago builder who at the time was president of the American Olympic Committee and was subsequently for many years president of the International Olympic Committee. He was ably assisted by Charles Sherrill, a one-star general, who, as a Yale sophomore, had been credited with inventing the crouched start in track races. Brundage and Sherrill argued that there *was* fair play in Germany—Brundage had been to Germany for a few days and seen no evil. Sherrill claimed that anyway there had never in history been a

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prominent Jewish athlete; he saw his task as getting at least one Jew on the German Olympic team, and with that his job was finished. As for the alleged obstacles placed in the way of Jewish athletes trying to reach Olympic stature, he had no business discussing that in Germany, for this would be a blatant case of political interference. Brundage and Sherrill said that it was all "merely a question of sports." Those proposing a boycott were in their opinion Jews or Communists, or both. They warned there would be a wave of anti-Semitism in America if a small minority succeeded in dictating to the majority. Sherrill also averred that Mussolini was a great man, a man of courage in a world of pussyfooters; Brundage, more cautiously, spoke of the contribution made by the Olympic games toward the moral betterment of the human race.

The great confrontation took place at the Amateur Athletic Union convention in Pittsburgh in November 1935. Brundage and Sherrill had a narrow majority, and with this the movement to boycott the games collapsed. In other countries the story was more or less the same. There was some opposition in France and Britain but it was not very determined, and on the other hand some prominent Jewish sportsmen such as the British sprint champion Harold Abrahams actively lobbied for participation at Berlin.

And thus in August 1936 the greatest, best-organized, most successful games got under way in the wonderful new Olympic stadium. These games have entered history as the Nazi Olympics. In an editorial published in November 1935 the New York *Times* had predicted that "if the Olympic games come off in Berlin as arranged, the event will be hailed as a wonderful Nazi demonstration and triumph." It *was* a triumph, an enormous success from the Nazi point of view. German athletes did better than those of any other nation; the prestige of the Third Reich soared at home and abroad. Thousands of visitors were deeply impressed by the spectacle of so many young Germans marching through the streets of Berlin—a demonstration of discipline, of joy, of peaceful competition. For some (as for Muhammad Ali when he met Brezhnev forty years later) it was the greatest hour of their lives. As Beverley Nichols, the British writer, recently reminisced: "This was Hitler's most spectacular exercise in his campaign to present the acceptable face of fascism. It was the biggest window-dressing operation in history. Berlin was *en fête*, beflagged and beribboned. . . . We were all dazzled—all of us—whether we were politically Right, Left, or Center. Even I, a fanatical peace-at-any-price pacifist, was almost ensnared. . . ."

WHAT are the lessons of 1936? It is easy in retrospect to find mitigating circumstances for the decision to go to Berlin: Germany would have gone to war in 1939 in any case, and the Nazi Olympics were not of much consequence in the moral and political build-up toward this aim. Forty years have passed, a new generation of American (and French and British) innocents has grown up, and again there are mitigating circumstances: today's Russians cannot compete with yesterday's Germans as organizers, and for achievement in athletics they will have to depend heavily on the state amateurs from Cuba and East Germany. Among their own sportsmen it will be difficult to find political enthusiasts, and it is unlikely that visitors from abroad, except the most naive, will return persuaded that they have seen the future and that it works. Like the Helsinki Final Act, the 1980 Olympic games are a window-dressing operation.

Nevertheless, whether people from the West should give their hand to a basically fraudulent operation of this kind is a different question altogether. The practice of the games has deviated so much from the original idea promoted by Baron Coubertin that they have become little *but* occasions for making political points, and (where the media are concerned) for making money. As Brian Glanville, the British novelist and sports-writer, has recently noted, the Olympic movement, which was supposed to foster the amateur spirit and "comity," has in fact fostered dishonesty, nationalistic fervor, drug addiction, and the exploitation of the very young. In addition, most sportsmen are quite indifferent to human rights and similar issues. If they regarded the murder of dozens of Mexican students on the eve of the 1968 games as no more than an annoying interference with their preparations,* there is no reason to assume that their feelings will be different with regard to the cause of freedom in the Soviet Union. In Mr. Glanville's opinion, the Olympic games and the Soviet Union deserve one another.

It has been said that the presence of many thousands of foreigners in the Soviet capital will have a liberalizing influence. Yet in 1936 the arrival of so many foreigners in Berlin did not make the slightest difference as far as the local population was concerned. In any case, German citizens were still freely permitted to travel abroad at that time; Soviet citizens have no such privileges. True, the forces of law and order in Moscow will have to work overtime for a few weeks, and there is always the danger that there may be some minor mishaps, but it would be wrong to attribute major political importance to the Western appearance in Moscow. The tourists will come and go; the KGB remains.

By now there are many vested interests involved in the 1980 Olympics—political, financial, and bureaucratic—and each has its own reason for justifying the charade. And so the runners and the

*Mr. Glanville wrote about the 1968 events in Mexico City in COMMENTARY, "A Memory of Mexico," March 1969.

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swimmers will compete in Moscow, the Soviet dissidents will continue to be reeducated in the camps, and men of good intention will go on warning us against the intrusion of politics into sports. But that is why, every so often, it may be useful to remind ourselves that there is a word to describe such easy rationalizations for accepting the view of reality which our enemies offer us. That word is appeasement.

SINCE World War II the term "appeasement" has acquired an exclusively bad connotation—principally through being associated with the conduct of England and France toward Germany during the period of Hitler's rise to power, and especially with the 1938 Munich agreement between Neville Chamberlain and Hitler. Yet prior to that time the term was merely neutral—meaning, to quote one historian, "the reduction of international tension by the methodical removal of the principal causes of friction among nations." Even at the time of the Munich agreement, the London *Times* could write: "The policy of international appeasement must of course be pressed forward." It was only later that the term acquired a different significance—so different, in fact, that an authority on the subject (W. N. Medlicott) could write by 1961 that "appeasement should now be added to imperialism on the list of words no scholar uses." A case could be made for adding "détente" to the list.

Appeasement has been practiced since time immemorial in relations among nations and states, principally by small and weak countries against their powerful neighbors. Sometimes the practice has met with success, sometimes not, depending always on the general situation and the appetites and ambitions of the powerful neighbors in question. The policy of Prussia vis-à-vis Napoleon up to 1806 was a blatant case of appeasement; so too was Sweden's policy vis-à-vis Nazi Germany in the early years of World War II. In all such cases it is legitimate to ask whether some other policy would have been advisable or indeed possible. For it cannot be argued that appeasement of an aggressor *never* pays; again, Sweden in World War II is a good example.

But if it is wrong simply to dismiss a policy of appeasement without considering its chances of success, it is equally wrong to ignore the truth that there is always in appeasement a tendency toward the rationalization of weakness, toward wishful thinking. This inclination may be rooted in altogether honorable motives—such as a deep-seated longing for peace—or in an (equally sincere) naiveté, or, less creditably, in a basic defeatism (as in pre-war France). The policy conducted by Chamberlain cannot be reasonably condemned as morally wrong, except in its last stages; rather, it was shortsighted and politically wrong, based on false premises. When Halifax wrote in 1938 that the German people longed for détente he was probably correct, but it was an irrelevant statement, for German foreign policy in 1938 was not being made by the German people. In the Third Republic, by contrast, the general political decay was such that a defeatist attitude could lead in some cases to active and enthusiastic collaboration with the Nazis.

Some policies of appeasement are rooted in dire necessity, others in shortsightedness, confusion, or even cowardice. The last kind, far from pacifying and resolving conflict, often only serves to postpone the inevitable confrontation, and so aggravates tensions and actually increases the danger of war. As dictatorships become accustomed to the retreat of democracies, they naturally assume that things will remain this way. If the democracies then decide to make a stand—as they usually do at the worst possible moment and under the worst possible conditions—the shock at this sudden display of "unreasonableness" may prevent compromise and help set the stage for a major world crisis. Western Europe faced a situation of just this kind in the late 1930's.

WHAT does all this have to do with relations between the United States and the Soviet Union today? Is détente turning out to be just another version of appeasement, both in fact and in name? One thing that can be said with assurance is that just as a policy of appeasement can only be judged by taking into account the objective circumstances involved, so détente—and by implication, its supposed opposite, cold war—must be placed in historical perspective.

Here we immediately come upon a paradox. If we were to depict the ups and downs of U.S.-Soviet relations in the form of a diagram, the curve would reach its lowest point in the years 1948-52, the years of Stalin's greatest animosity toward the West, and its upper limit in 1971-72, when Nixon and Brezhnev met and showered one another with the rhetoric of peaceable intentions. Yet the fact is that during the "dangerous" years of the 1950's and 1960's, Soviet arms-spending did not increase as steeply as it has done in the 1970's, the years of "détente." According to data recently published by the Arms Control Agency, headed by Paul Warnke, Soviet military spending rose from $80 billion in 1967—adjusted for inflation—to $121 billion in 1976. (American military spending fell during this period from $120 billion to $87 billion.) Again: the years in which Soviet foreign policy was most pacific were the years immediately after Stalin's death; the closer we come to the present period of "relaxation of tensions," the more tension there seems to be—the Cuban and Berlin crises, the Yom Kippur War, several African wars and coups in Asia, and the end is not yet in sight.

Détente, in other words, seems to be nothing but the continuation of the cold war by other means, and sometimes by the same means. This

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is not to say that it has nothing to recommend it as a policy, especially from the Soviet point of view. As far as the Russians are concerned, their foreign policy has always made greater progress when they have taken a "soft" line toward the outside world than during periods when a harsher line prevailed (such as during the "third period" of the Comintern in the late 1920's or the late Stalin period). In this connection, Sir William Hayter, a former British ambassador to Moscow, has invoked the Aesopian fable about the bet between the sun and the wind over the best way to get a man's cloak off: the more the wind huffs and puffs, the tighter the man clasps his cloak around him; the sun need but smile, and the man removes his cloak of his own volition. "Détente," Sir William has observed, "is an alternative way of getting the West to take its cloak off."

Détente may also have its advantages for the West, but what is important to remember in this context is that "détente" and "cold war" are only two sides of the same coin. One side may have been cleaned and polished, but only an inexperienced collector would be willing to pay a higher price on that account alone. This point is worth stressing if only because the idea has gained ground in the United States that cold war and détente are diametrically opposed strategies. Thus, there is now in some circles a great fear of a "return to the cold war," which, it is believed, will somehow lead directly out of the present situation ("détente") to a catastrophic future. And out of this fear there arises the impulse to appeasement.

UNDERLYING the appeasement of the 1930's was a trauma, that of World War I, the many hundreds of thousands of soldiers killed at Paschendaele and the Somme. Underlying the appeasement of the 1970's is the trauma of Vietnam. Democracies, with rare exceptions, always incline to pacifism, and they find it difficult to understand those who do not share this predisposition: how can anyone be so unreasonable as to consider war an instrument for the solution of conflicts? Having met individual Germans in the 1930's, many Englishmen and Frenchmen reached the conclusion that these were not fanatics but eminently sensible people, people like themselves; surely they would not want to go to war.

Today there cannot possibly be more than a handful of people in America who have any sympathy for the Soviet political system, the attractiveness of which is clearly limited to the world's most backward countries, from Afghanistan to South Yemen and Ethiopia. There are, however, others who think that American politics are evil and American society is sinful, and that for this reason America has no right to play an active part in world affairs—except perhaps to share its riches with less fortunate countries. Some of these people will welcome further American setbacks, or at the very least will view with misgiving any improvement in America's position, which in their opinion would lead only to the strengthening of reactionary forces.

Supporters of the kind of détente that is indistinguishable from appeasement see themselves as rational, moderate, and open-minded—"liberals," in short—in contrast to "hawks," whose views are said to be based on a pathological distrust of Soviet motives, on aggressive impulses, on a dangerous, primitive patriotism, and in some cases on crude self-interest—"conservatives," in short. The advocate of détente/appeasement sees the Soviet Union as a giant country beset by major internal problems with which its aged leaders are unable to cope. These internal difficulties, the argument continues, make any major foreign-political adventure highly unlikely. By and large, the Soviet Union is a status-quo power, or in the process of becoming one. American conflicts with Russia are largely based on misunderstandings which, with patience and good will, can be resolved. The movement toward greater freedom in the Soviet Union is inexorable; the West has a historical opportunity to expedite this development by following a moderate policy and thus assisting the doves in the Kremlin.* To influence events in Moscow, we ought to expand our contacts in every field—intensify economic relations, strengthen cultural ties, build bridges of every kind, and, generally speaking, develop systematically a climate of trust and friendship. For unless there is such a web of close relations, the Russians will have no major stake in détente and the West little leverage over them.

The appeaser is not much alarmed by Soviet advances in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, or elsewhere; he is alarmed by the climate of "hysteria" which he believes these advances have engendered in the United States. The Soviet Union, he holds, cannot afford to expand its sphere of influence any further without grave risk; events in Africa have shown that the Russians are as likely as not to be expelled from countries in which they have gained a temporary foothold. All in all, he believes, Soviet advances should not be exaggerated: nowhere have Soviet soldiers been involved, and as for the Cubans, no one can say for certain whether they have not been acting largely on their own.

Similar arguments are used in the field of defense. The Russians, deeply shocked by their traumatic experiences in World War II, are said

* Any student of the Nazi era will have come across dozens of newspaper columns and diplomatic memoranda calling upon Western leaders to support the "moderate" Hitler against the extremist Ribbentrop or the bellicose Hess or the aggressive German generals. Halifax to Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, August 5, 1938: Hitler fears Britain and France as much as Britain and France fear him; his mass demonstrations of military might are reactive in nature, sparked by the predictions of German intelligence that the Western powers intend to launch a preventive war against Germany.

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to have learned the obvious lesson: always be prepared. But their strength is purely (or mainly) defensive in nature, and if they have outpaced the West in arms, one should not forget that they do face potential enemies—both West and East. The appeaser is not unduly worried by reports about Western military inferiority, because, even if true, such analyses are meaningless. In the nuclear age, military force can no longer be translated into political influence.

The appeaser sympathizes with Soviet dissidents but regards them as a nuisance; he is concerned, rather, with the "obsessive and crusading" approach of President Carter toward human rights in the USSR, and the general overreaction to Soviet dissent in the West. With all one's good will toward this handful of brave people, their complaints should never be allowed to obstruct the wider attempts at reconciliation between West and East. The dissenters are isolated politically, and in the long run the cause of freedom in the Soviet Union will be helped more by a climate of détente and relaxation of tensions than by the futile and pathetic demonstrations of the dissenters. The appeaser severely denounces Brzezinski; commends Secretary of State Vance; and distrusts President Carter for his undue emphasis on human rights. According to the appeaser, the President ought to refrain from any statement or action that might be considered provocative by the Soviet leadership.

Lastly, and most decisively, there is the issue of SALT. This affects the security of the United States, indeed its very existence, and the peace of the world. It should therefore, according to the appeaser, be treated differently from all other subjects and addressed on a continuing basis with the highest priority. Indeed, the urgency of concluding an accord with the Soviets in this area is now greater than ever. For whereas it was once claimed that in the field of nuclear weapons the Soviet Union aimed at no more than parity with the West, most people who held this view are now willing to admit that they were mistaken. But for the appeaser, the fact of growing Soviet superiority only underlines the need for conciliatory gestures, since any other course would lead to confrontation. Some supporters of appeasement say that they themselves are ready to take action to catch up with the Soviet military effort, but the American people are unwilling to assume the necessary financial and political burden; others insist that the United States should simply accept the fact that it will no longer be number one in the world—in their view, a healthy development in any case.

APPEASEMENT is a powerfully attractive position for many sectors of the population in a democratic society, but some have embraced it more enthusiastically than others. Diplomats, it goes without saying, are professionally inclined toward appeasement; unless they pursue it to excess, they should perhaps not be charged with actually sinning in this regard. Most diplomats—Secretary Vance's colleagues among them—would no doubt argue that while Soviet behavior has been tiresome, our side is not blameless either, and that quiet diplomacy is far more effective than harsh words and defiant gestures. And when quiet diplomacy shows no results—it hardly ever does, except on matters of no political consequence—there is always some excuse.

Big business, despite Leninist mythology to the contrary, is usually found in the front line of appeasement. Profitable deals depend on peace and calm; a political crisis always has a detrimental effect on business. A few may benefit from rearmament, but most do not. Thus, when the Moscow representative of International Harvester was arrested by the KGB on some minor trumped-up charge, he was dropped by his colleagues like a leper, and gained the support of his own firm only after some delay. This too is an old story. Writing on Chamberlain, Harold Nicolson noted that it was not the descendants of the old governing classes who displayed the greatest enthusiasm for him but the descendants of the industrial revolution: "Mr. Chamberlain is the idol of the businessmen." And A. L. Rowse, the historian, added, "These men were essentially middle-class, not aristocrats. They did not have the hereditary sense of the security of the state, unlike Churchill, Eden, and the Cecils." The point should not be stretched too far (there is no aristocracy in America), but it is certainly true that big business in the U.S. has no "hereditary sense of the security of the state." It wants protection for its operations abroad, but it is quite reluctant to pay for it. It wants business and politics to be kept strictly apart.

The churches (and for good measure, the synagogues) are an important segment of the appeasement camp, for reasons that need hardly be elaborated in detail. British appeasement of the 1930's owed much to Nonconformism; Sir Nevile Henderson, the arch-appeaser, noted in his autobiography that he had been "selected by Providence for the definite mission of helping to preserve the peace of the world." The fact that, historically, the church has not always lived up to its peaceful mission—one need only cite its record in Nazi Germany and in Fascist Italy—makes many contemporary churchmen doubly anxious to have a spotless attitude. "We are not the policemen of the world" thus becomes a modern version of Cain's protestation of non-responsibility for Abel in Genesis 4:9—incidentally, the text of one of Chamberlain's most famous speeches in 1938. Other churchmen have veered toward a curious form of radicalism, supporting all kinds of spurious liberation fronts, attacking democratic countries, turning a blind eye to oppressive dictatorships.

American media have a bias toward appease-

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ment; the same was true of most British and French newspapers in the 1930's. Some editorialists and columnists in our age pontificate like bishops, taking for granted their moral right and intellectual qualifications to do so. As keepers of the liberal conscience, they harp on guilt feelings the way the appeasers of the 1930's harped on the "injustice" done to Germany in the Versailles peace treaty. They know, in any case, that it is the task of the media to criticize one's own government, not the government of others.

Lastly, the universities. Dozens of books, thousands of articles have been published over the last fifteen years to the effect that the outbreak of the cold war was predominantly the fault of Truman, Dulles, and their acolytes, that the United States is the spearhead of world reaction and imperialism, that its policy has been counter-revolutionary all along, that Soviet totalitarianism is a figment of the imagination, and that the Western democracies have been moving steadily toward fascism. Stalin and his successors are presented in this literature either as harmless social reformers or as conservative status-quo politicians. This brand of revisionism has been taught for years and has entered college textbooks; one of its saving graces may be that it contains the seed of its own destruction, as a new generation must inevitably come along to revise the revisers, but for the moment it is still going strong. One must be careful, of course, to dissociate the academic foreign-policy establishment from views like these, but even in the establishment, appeasement has many influential proponents—just as it had them on both the Left and the Right in the 1930's, from Toynbee to Trevelyan and Charles Beard.

Appeasement, in short, has been "in" for a long time, and opposition to it strictly unfashionable. There are signs that this may now be changing. But why should it have gone on for so long? The politics of appeasement are the *fleurs du mal* of a more widespread political decadence—a decadence highly visible in both England and France in the 1930's, and especially in France, where society seemed to have lost its instinct for national self-preservation. There are in America at the present time elements of decadence, which are based not on a cosmic despair but, to the contrary, on a belief that the country is so secure that no outside danger can possibly threaten it. Daladier complained in 1938 that France was being represented abroad as a "drab country frightened about her future, concerned only with material interests." Actually, as subsequent events were to show, this was a fairly accurate description. But present-day America does not really resemble pre-war France; there is, if anything, a similarity with pre-war Britain, a country adrift, confused, and misguided, whose people, good-humored and peace-loving, are willing to be pushed around and lied to both at home and on the international scene.* But in Britain in the 1930's there was a limit beyond which this process could not go, for the British were not masochists, and they did not believe that the future belonged to the dictators. At the moment of truth, the remaining diehard defeatists disappeared without a trace, like the ships of the Spanish Armada.

Is America nearing such a moment of truth today? It is certainly the case that a turning point is at hand in U.S.-Soviet relations. Even in the camp of the appeasers there is a new lack of confidence in "détente"—brought about not so much by the force of counter-argument, of which there has been, of late, a considerable amount, as by the disillusioning actions of the Soviet Union. Soviet rearmament has proceeded at a steady rate over the years, and the Russians, while making no secret of their desire to receive a maximum amount of economic and technological aid from the West, have also made no secret of their intention to continue the ideological struggle, i.e., confrontation. This does not, for them, refer to philosophical debates over the merits of the respective social systems but to real political struggle which may well involve limited military operations. It means, for all practical purposes, the extension of the Soviet sphere of influence.

The sudden realization that the West has fallen behind has led to a sense of danger and even of crisis. It is still true that the immediate danger is less than it was in the 1930's: the Soviet Union, unlike Nazi Germany, is under no constraint to go to war, and even if there were such a temptation, there is always the nuclear deterrent. But if the nuclear bomb will prevent global war, it will not forestall local wars outside Europe. And this means, as everyone must know by now, the end of the old-style détente.

A process of gradual reorientation has thus begun. It would be unwise to hasten this process, for the illusions of the early 1970's will not die easily, and there are still a great many people ready to give détente (as they understand it) yet another chance. Indeed, it is still claimed by some that détente was never given a first chance. Thus, in a recently published symposium Samuel Pisar and David Riesman argued that linkage of the human-rights issue to normalization of relations with the USSR "undermines the remnants of détente": others, such as Stephen Cohen of Princeton and Donald Kendall of Pepsi Cola, have maintained that increased trade could do much to cement relations with the Russians and that workable

*This is perhaps a good place to note that although I have limited myself here to examples of appeasement of Germany (and Italy) in the 1930's, and of the Soviet Union more recently, instances abound elsewhere as well. Of late, both Western Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States have had to swallow many a bitter pill dispensed by the oil-producing countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

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coexistence is threatened by resolutions such as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.* These arguments, however, do not survive critical examination: disillusionment with détente in the West set in well before the human-rights issue ever became topical, and there is no reason to assume that more trade or even more aid would have an effect either on Soviet arms-spending or on the active pursuit of Soviet foreign-policy aims in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere.

About East-West trade in general it can be truly said that seldom in history has so much been written by so many about so little. The amount of such commerce is small by any standards, and Soviet policy holds that it should not grow beyond a certain, limited percentage of overall Soviet foreign trade. The development of U.S.-Soviet commercial dealings has been hampered not so much by American restrictions as by Soviet lack of hard currency. The outstanding hard-currency debt of the Russians is now nearing $20 billion; the debt of the Communist bloc as a whole is well beyond $50 billion. Thus, when the Soviets warn the West that they intend to divert their trade to countries which do not practice credit restrictions, this is merely another way of saying that they wish to reallocate their debts. Such threats should be faced with equanimity in the West, yet in certain circles they still create a condition of near-panic. Thus, a Washington *Post* writer recently urged that the U.S. help Russia alleviate its oil crisis, for unless it did so the Russians might be in an ugly mood, and this could have, *inter alia*, regrettable consequences for Israel.

Messrs. Pisar, Cohen, and Kendall also suggest that détente should be founded on a mutual understanding of the two superpowers' national interests. Détente could indeed be saved if the national interest of the United States were defined as pertaining to North America alone, with a much more liberal view taken of Soviet national interest—covering Europe and Asia, and, for good measure, perhaps also Africa. But it is doubtful whether this kind of "symmetry" would appeal to many Americans, and it is certain that in a long-range view it is not in America's best interest.

THUS, the process of disenchantment will go on. Intellectually, it must be said, the case for appeasement was never particularly impressive; it rested not so much on an objective political analysis as on a mood, a set of hopes and fears. There is no denying that the aspirations involved were often praiseworthy, but a policy arising from such aspirations can only succeed if there is at least a minimum of reciprocity from the other side. The Soviets, alas, are not in a reciprocating mood, and they have pulled the rug out from under the appeasers. (Still, it is doubtful that a single Western diplomat or columnist will have to look for a new job as the result of having been persistently wrong.)

But what, it will be asked, could possibly replace détente? The answer, quite obviously, is more détente. But it must be a retreat (or an advance) from appeasement to true détente. The game must no longer be played according to one-sided rules; there must be fewer unilateral concessions. Soviet views on the continuation of the ideological (i.e., political) struggle should be taken seriously in Washington, and America should do some reciprocal struggling of its own. Whether those who now direct U.S. foreign policy would be capable of pursuing a more effective policy is not certain, but this is not the decisive issue. For once it were accepted that true détente has to be based on mutual benefit, there would be irresistible pressure for policy change—under the present management if possible, under a new one if necessary. There would be pained outcries, not only from Moscow but also from nearer home, invoking the dangers of "confrontation." But these would be rearguard actions which would not affect the generally more healthy direction of U.S.-Soviet relations.

*_Common Sense in U.S.-Soviet Relations_*, edited by Carl Marcy, American Committee on East-West Accord, Washington, 1978.

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The Quality of Life

John P. Sisk

A FEW years ago the gynecologist Boyd Cooper published *Sex Without Tears*, a book that was proposed as a guide for the sexual revolution. It was not spectacularly successful; perhaps there was too much competition. By that time the sexual revolution was in high career: closets were emptying, marriages were opening up, swingers were swinging, the hum of the vibrator was loud in the land. There were almost as many guides as positions for intercourse; anyone who took it upon himself to read all of them would not only have ended up thoroughly confused but would have had little time left over to put any one of them into practice.

Sex Without Tears is nevertheless memorable and still timely because of one of its central confessional episodes. This had to do with Dr. Cooper's first abortion, an event that troubled his conscience for many weeks. Eventually, however, he was able to find peace of mind and a new meaning in the ethics of home, church, and profession which had occasioned his soul-searching: "I learned," he writes, "that the value of life itself, as a mere body count, is not the ultimate judgment for a doctor. I came to believe that it is the quality of life, not its mere existence, that matters." Here indeed the doctor reveals himself to be a child of the 70's. If anything marks the decade it is not simply its nervous concern about the quality of life, but its conviction that the effort to distinguish between quality and quantity is one of the clearest indications of moral earnestness.

Given the moral confusion of the times, to say nothing of the general apprehension that the quality of life is deteriorating, this preoccupation with quality is understandable. According to Vincent Teresa, former number three man in his New England crime family, even the Mafia is in trouble because of the low quality of the present generation of thugs. Nevertheless, the apparently bracing and clarifying concern with the quality of our life does not appear to have made our lives happier or less complicated. Arthur Koestler's explanation of this failure may be as good as anyone's. In his recent book, *Janus*, he argues once again that we are the victims of an evolutionary blunder which has left our reasoning forebrain inadequately integrated with our older emotional midbrain. This theory may give little comfort to meliorists or downright utopians, but at least it helps to explain why human beings do so badly whenever they get into situations in which quality becomes the grand imperative in their decision-making.

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II

THE trouble is that the clear disjunction between quality and quantity is possible only on a relatively high level of abstraction. Below that level, in the hectic stock exchange of quotidian life, quality and quantity are bewilderingly interrelated. This would be true even in a society in which there was general agreement about values. In the relatively affluent, sensate, secular Western countries, however, quality decisions tend to be so badly contaminated by quantitative considerations that they are generally only quantity decisions in disguise. In part, no doubt, this is a strategy by means of which we keep in check our characteristic fear of affluence—which we have less reason to fear in proportion as we are able to believe that our first concern is the quality, not the material abundance, of our lives. So in the name of quality we attach ourselves, at least nominally, to programs in which small is beautiful, less is beautiful, or few is beautiful; so we identify the enemy as gas-guzzling autos, urban sprawl, technological atrocities such as strip mining and oil spills, indiscriminate breeding, industrial waste, media overload, etc.

Yet it is not hard to sense behind this overprotesting anxiety the endemic conviction of our culture that quantity guarantees quality; that unless we have a great deal the good life is unimaginable, and that in the interest of making sure we continue to have a great deal it might be wise to induce a sufficient number of people (not necessarily ourselves) to conserve or cut back. "You only go 'round once in life," the Schlitz beer ad keeps warning us, thereby encapsulating a philosophy which in our relatively rich society

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cannot help but mean to vast numbers of people (even discriminating ones) that the life that is not gloriously abundant is qualitatively unacceptable. By the same token, physical magnitude, despite all pious talk to the contrary, remains one of the surest indications of value, which is good news for mountains and redwood trees but bad for fetuses.

We seem in fact to be in the midst of one of those recurring periods when, as in Mark Twain's Gilded Age or Scott Fitzgerald's Jazz Age, we are captivated by the romance of money. Consider how the American imagination is heated up by the well-publicized incomes of professional athletes, movie and television superstars, media entrepreneurs, and pop artists. Figures like Reggie Jackson, O.J. Simpson, Jack Nicholson, David Frost, Barbara Walters, Johnny Carson, and Bob Dylan belong, allowing for all differences, in the worlds of Jay Gould and Jay Gatsby. As the Watergate literary renaissance makes clear, sin itself pays off grandly. It is no wonder that even people of small talent are tormented by visions of wealth (tastefully enjoyed, of course) beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. Nor is it any wonder that in such an environment so many of us understand quantity as a synonym, not an antonym, of quality.

In a society in which changes are not noteworthy unless they can be called revolutions, and in which all revolutions generate rising expectations, the point at which there is sufficient quantity for quality to happen keeps rising also, so that GNP becomes the most reliable index to the good life. Inevitably, then, one is inclined to measure the quality of one's life by one's capacity as a consumer. Hence a few years ago a *Playboy* brochure, directed to potential advertisers, called attention to the style-conscious "new breed" of college-man reader whose "capacity as a consumer is already enormous, and it will grow with his income and his ambition." Dr. Cooper's "mere body count" in these circumstances is as menacing as a Mongol horde, and "triage," or lifeboat ethics, is only simple prudence. The very metaphor, with its image of a vast and hopeless disproportion between the saved and the doomed, works both sides of the street to its moral advantage: the low quality of the life of the doomed by not being cruelly prolonged is transmuted into a higher quality of life for the saved. Here in fact is moral ground upon which men of good will and the Mafia can stand together.

However cold-blooded triage may seem to sensitive souls, it is as common in human history as the fact or fear of scarcity. In an interview in the *Humanist*, Herman Kahn of the Hudson Institute has called attention to a subtle form of it that he detects now in upper-class elites, whose experience is that their standard of living "goes down absolutely and relatively as the world grows richer." The upper classes, he says, "want privileges; they want spontaneity, large amounts of privacy; they want to be able to do what they please when they feel like it, as they feel like it. They don't like traffic jams." To these elites, organizations like the Club of Rome speak persuasively of an anti-work and anti-growth ethic, for growth endangers the quality of their lives by threatening to spread available means more thinly. Kahn, with his "neo-stoic" brand of humanism, takes the position that the poor nations ought to be encouraged and helped to work hard and grow and thereby get richer. But since this is a problem-solving rather than a quality-improving strategy, rich elites are likely to think that Kahn is something of a boor—if not actively on the side of the Mongols. Even those who do not think of themselves as siding with rich elites (see Theodore Roszak, in his introduction to E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*), take such a solution as an endorsement of that "ecological stupidity of industrial man and his love affair with the terrible simplicities of quantification" that overlook "the incommensurable qualities of life."

III

At the same time there is that other tradition, otherworldly and self-transcending, in which a high quality of human experience demands an extreme detachment from material goods, from mere quantity. As practiced by Greek cynics and Eastern and early Christian ascetics, this tradition no longer offers a compelling approach to the problem of quality and quantity, and is hardly what the small-is-beautiful people have in mind. Such figures as the philosopher Diogenes sleeping like a beggar on the bare Athenian ground, St. Simeon Stylites on his Alexandrian pillar, or St. Anthony in his desert cave, are to us tourist attractions who affect the quality of life only insofar as they increase the quantity of its spectacle, the way Disneyland or Las Vegas does. If we connect with this tradition at all it is likely to be by means of such lucrative enterprises as transcendental meditation, which increase the total experience of life for those who cannot think of quality apart from a multiplication of options. True asceticism operates on a policy of rigorous exclusion and to us points toward the principled minimization of life in Orwell's *1984*. In that novel, the planned low quality of life is a bitter caricature of traditional ascetic practice, which, Evelyn Underhill points out in her classic study *Mysticism*, aims to sharpen perception and cultivate a higher form of common sense—to make possible, that is, a truly high-quality life.

Still compelling to Americans, however—at least as an idea—is the combination of ascetical cynic

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and epicure we find in Thoreau, whose aim, as John Ciardi has nicely put it, "was to save on the low levels in order to spend on the high." In *Walden* Thoreau tells us, "To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of the arts." To that end he would "live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that is not life." He would keep his accounts on his thumbnail, eat one meal a day instead of three, and in all things cultivate "a rigid economy, a stern and Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose." Most of us have little taste for such Spartan simplicities, but the image of such a man is a great comfort to us and we are willing to believe that the quality of his life was very high indeed. He was, as we know, a great inspiration a decade ago to the counter-cultural Left, which managed to find in his anti-communal individualism a sanction for its efforts to establish enclaves of high communal quality outside fragmented and materialistic middle-class life.

The image of Thoreau is also a great comfort to the historian L. S. Stavrianos, who in *The Promise of the Coming Dark Age* sees Thoreau as embodying the revolutionary and egalitarian spirit of 1776 in his transgressive effort to assert the moral quality of life against the dehumanizing machine of civilization. For Stavrianos, as his title suggests, there is a recurrent pattern in our history which might be expressed in vulgar terms as the belief that it is always darkest before the dawn. What appears then to be a fragmentation and disorientation of effort, or a ruthless abandonment of traditional Western values, is actually, for those who can read the figure in the carpet, part of an inexorable movement toward a higher quality of life on a global scale. So he ends his book with Pete Seeger's lyrical image of green grass sprouting through concrete.

As befits one for whom dark ages are arduous prologues to ages of light, Stavrianos finds human existence to be Spartan-like where it is most promising: in Tanzania, "where President Nyerere has a monthly salary of $570 and no car of his own"; in Cuba, where Fidel Castro gives his people not the "consumer goods and prosperity they would like" but honesty in government and essential social services; in the necessary, if draconian, austerities of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; in the China of Mao's Cultural Revolution. Unfortunately, events in some of these places have begun to suggest less green grass sprouting through concrete than old-fashioned triage on a grand scale (see Carl Gershman's "After the Dominoes Fell" in the May COMMENTARY). Nevertheless, it was clear from the critical response to his book that Stavrianos had found favor with many—among them, no doubt, a few disaffected members of *Playboy*'s "new breed" generation—who had become disillusioned with quantity as a synonym for quality.

THE spirit of triage is, of course, not foreign to Thoreau, but it tends to be overlooked, if not forgiven, by those who, like Stavrianos, insist on reading him as a champion of the egalitarian spirit of 1776, when, in fact, it is at least as easy to read him as the great presiding presence for the libertarian Right. Read the account in *Walden* of his attempt to improve the quality of life of that bog-digging Irish immigrant John Field, burdened with greasy-faced wife and starveling brats, "still thinking to improve his condition one day," but obviously doomed to the treadmill of sheer survival. "I tried to help him with my experiences," says Thoreau, and so Field has to listen (with respectful incomprehension, we must imagine) to the details of this wildly irrelevant experience until his mentor is in a position to exclaim, "But alas, the culture of an Irishman is an enterprise to be undertaken with a moral bog hoe." Here we are uncomfortably close to that mere body count which for Dr. Cooper opposes the quality of life—that same mere body count that so offends people like Roszak when it takes the form of the tourism that deposits insensitive hordes around great natural wonders like Old Faithful. We are close too to that forced evacuation of "dirty" Phnom Penh (Pol Pot's moral bog hoe?) which an approving Stavrianos interprets as "a qualitative change within the Third World."

The epicurean and Spartan Thoreau, disdainful as he was of the railroad, cable, and telegraph, would give little comfort to the neo-stoic Kahn, who sees technology as the hope for the world's poor. "I would be happy if all the meadows on the earth were left in a wild state," the former says, which affiliates him with Kahn's wealthy elites who associate wild meadows with freedom to enjoy a high quality of life, but disaffiliates him from Pol Pot who wants to turn the wild meadows into rice paddies. He even entertains a romance of the poor that has traditionally been a means of keeping the conscience of quality-seeking elites from being troubled: "The town's poor often seem to me to live the most independent lives of any."

Of course, we know that this remark must first be heard in its own time and place, which was neither Pol Pot's nor Kahn's. Thoreau really believed that an important kind of independence (his kind) was available to the poor, which was one reason why he took such a dim view of philanthropy. But a great writer refuses to stay in his own time and place; something in him keeps insisting that he is for all times and places—that same something that would later express itself as a fear that the imprisoned John Brown might be pardoned rather than hung and thus not become valuable body count for the cause of abolition. And it is when Thoreau insists that we see ourselves in his context that it becomes possible to

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suspect that he had traveled too much in Concord. If, like Emerson, he had gone abroad he might have had to modify his ideas about the poor and many other things. Thoreau as tourist, perhaps at peace at last with the hated railroad, might be less useful to Stavrianos and Roszak, but at least he might have learned the extent to which the independence of the quantitatively deprived poor enhances the quality of life for the rich.

Perhaps, too, a well-traveled Thoreau would have been induced to temper his anarchistic bias against the low quality of gregarious American democracy, which he found to be "in many respects very admirable," but only from a point of view he considered of little value. Confined too much to Concord, it was too easy for him to anticipate Roszak's dissatisfaction in *Where the Wasteland Ends* with the "facile association of scientific knowledge and egalitarian politics," and even to share some of Roszak's hankering after a great restoration of pagan gnosticism. A stay-at-home libertarian in an America upon which Jackson had set his mark, Thoreau was the aristocrat that, George Woodcock has argued, all anarchists tend to be. If he had been a traveler he might have gone overseas and not only seen the Sphinx, as Emerson did, but he might have met that contemporary imperial self, the German Max Stirner, whose *The Ego and His Own* was published ten years before *Walden*. Stirner had advocated, perhaps in an effort to transcend a life too lacking in quality, a Union of Egoists. He had asked himself Thoreau's question—in order to be truly himself must he not "leave untouched the majesty of the State, the sanctity of the Church"?—and like Thoreau he had answered Yes in thunder.

IV

No Union of Egoists is going to be much concerned with justice, since it threatens the diminution of the imperial self. To Stirner a concern for social justice is a concern for species, for essences, for a realm of spooks. To Thoreau a concern for social justice points to the spiritual dissipation of philanthropy: better almshouses and the collection of funds "for the support of such widows and orphans that may be." It is nevertheless clear that for many now the proper synonym for quality is justice. Kahn, I suspect, would not accept this; for him such social justice as is possible assumes an application of the trickle-down economic theory, which is opposed by those in the advanced countries who want to limit growth in the interests of quality, as well as by those who, like Stavrianos, see it as favoring a continued dependence on the corruptions of the capitalist West.

Stavrianos places his faith and his hope in the New Man he sees emerging in Mao's China, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and Castro's Cuba—a creature qualitatively far removed from *Playboy*'s "new breed" man who has been shaped by the forces of modernization. He finds a model of what this New Man may become in those twenty-seven remnants of the Stone Age, the gentle Tasaday, discovered in recent years in the Mindanao rain forest of the Philippines. The Tasadays are completely without aggressiveness and acquisitiveness, and uninhibited in expressions of affection and benevolent communality; apparently, they are beyond the reach of Koestler's theory about the human brain. Stavrianos concedes that when such a model is approximated by the New Man in China, Western observers are likely to be put off by the didactic moralizing and relentless indoctrination that seems to have produced him; thus they miss the true significance and high quality of his social commitment.

Stavrianos is as impressed as most of us First Worlders are by the image of a society integrated beyond the reach of disaffection, alienation, and anomie, and thus blessed with a high state of morale. For Kahn, to whom Pete Seeger does not sing as persuasively as he does to Stavrianos, low morale is a problem everywhere, in the Third World no less than in the First. The proponents of triage are obviously concerned with the consequences for morale of an overcrowded lifeboat. Dr. Cooper's morale—and, one must assume, the quality of his life—was much improved when he realized the unimportance of mere body count. The Tasadays, who could hardly be troubled with body count, presumably have high morale and a high quality of life, though it is likely that they would have bored Thoreau with their idyllic togetherness as much as John Field did with his absurd ambitions. Thoreau's own morale seems always to have been high; for him as for the *Playboy* man, "The world is not a veil of tears." Indeed, the fact that a basically confessional writer records few if any low moments can make him sound slightly unreal now. Mean-spirited postmodernists might even suspect that his high morale depended on his ability to hide from himself the fact that in any honest view the quality of life under any circumstances is abominable for everyone.

In fact, the willingness to accept morale as an index to the quality of life can itself be an index to much contemporary desperation. It is easy to believe that terrorist groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Irish IRA, the German Baader-Meinhof gang, and the Italian Red Brigades are blessed with the high morale that has always characterized fanaticism. Such groups are no more bothered by mere body count than by problems of identity, alienation, or anomie. They provide international models for one kind of communal response to the low moral quality of contemporary life that is the consequence of our uncertainty about what or where virtue is.

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Like the Robespierre of Georg Büchner's play, *Danton's Death*, they know that virtue without terror is powerless and pernicious, for "terror is the consequence of virtue."

Fanatic terrorists, to borrow the novelist Muriel Spark's fine phrase, experience a transfiguration of the commonplace. This is why it is so easy to feel ambivalent, even envious, about the acts of terrorists, for we sense them to be expressions of that transfiguration of the all too commonplace self that defines the high-quality existence. One thinks of the transfiguring power of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* with its fanatic certainty about the possibility of improving the quality of German life—or, nearer home, of the transfiguring power of the Marxist vision as it was expressed romantically in the lives of those American Communists about whom Vivian Gornick has recently written. As with all romantics, their morale was high as long as they kept the faith. Like the Nazis, they stand there in our near past as object lessons of what people will do when the quality of life is coterminous with the pursuit of justice. Measured against such grand transfigurations, bog-digging John Field is as disposable as he was for Thoreau.

V

The American Communists, whether pictured by Miss Gornick or by Daniel Aaron in his much better book, *Writers on the Left*, are like true believers everywhere: stalwart characters. The authority to which they are committed may shift direction from day to day as it picks its way through the minefield of international politics, but in their commitment to it they are as predictable as the heroes in Horatio Alger's stories. When they cease to be predictable it is because their morale and the quality of their lives have begun to deteriorate. The New Man in whom Stavrianos has so much hope is more plastic than this. Human nature for him "is neither pacific nor violent, neither cooperative nor predatory." People have no original sin and are not "cursed by innate selfishness or perversity," but, as he approvingly quotes the psychologist Albert Bandura, are characterized by "a vast potentiality that can be fashioned by social circumstances into a variety of forms."

Such a theory does not consort well with Koestler's notion about the human brain, and to Thoreau would probably sound too much like the theory behind Jacksonian democracy, but it is understandably attractive to those captivated by the vision of New Men for New Times. If human nature is really a blank check that can be filled out according to the needs of those who have the power of pen, then there is hope that green grass will finally break through the concrete of the past. Most of the great revolutionaries who have aspired to turn the world around or upside down have expressed or implied such a theory. The problem historically, however, has been that the effort to do this against the opposition of established human nature has required the forceful and charismatic presence of figures like Robespierre or Lenin, who, repeating the heroes of old, express an unconditional and even fanatic commitment to structuring values. Such heroes have little interest in functioning as midwives to the infinite potential of human nature; they wish, in emulation of the genes as understood by the sociobiologists, to determine the nature of human nature, and therefore the quality of life, once and for all. If they break up someone else's concrete it is only because they expect to replace it with their own.

Professor Stavrianos, of course, is not in favor of laying down more concrete. Nevertheless, his book projects the image of an author ultimately less concerned with the plasticity of human nature than with the hope that plastic human nature can be structured according to those values (about the lasting value of which he appears to have no doubt) that will make a higher quality of life possible for everyone. The same conflict between overt and covert commitment is apparent in that most luxuriant and profitable of quality-of-life enterprises, the human-potential movement. Its theme is the infinite potential of the precious self, yet it is sustained not simply by a faith that the true self is a kind of absolute that was there all along, like a diamond buried under layers of cultural concrete, but that the high adventure of discovering it has the sanction and protection of some metaphysical agency. Perhaps, then, it is possible to base one's hopes for the future on a plastic human nature only to the extent that one has confidence in a benevolent fate, cosmic process, historical dialectic, or hidden hand which is not plastic, which in fact substitutes for old-fashioned character formation.

What is especially noteworthy about this plastic or blank-check theory of human nature is its positivistic clarity. Human nature as traditionally conceived in our culture is not simply existence and potential but has an irreducible essence, so that there are limits beyond which it cannot be manipulated. However much one may know about it, it remains, like the human condition itself, mysteriously beyond the reach of all theory. In the plastic theory of human nature, however, we have come to the end of mystery; now the mystery belongs back in what Max Stirner (anticipating B. F. Skinner) calls the spook world. What we have then is a "stop-human-nature" movement that is thematically related to what Eric Voegelin in *The Ecumenic Age* calls the "stop-history" movement of Hegel, Marx, and Comte, who were of the opinion that "history had run long enough to reveal its mystery." In Voegelin's view, Stavrianos's optimistic reading of

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the coming dark age would, therefore, have to be placed in the Gnostic tradition, which, despite all its rebuffs by the mysterious perversities of history, continues to engender optimism about closing the gap between quality and quantity so that a New Man will be possible.

Of course, there are others who, though they do not put their apprehensions in Voegelin's rich perspective, still see the plastic theory of human nature as a threat to the quality of life. Peter Schrag in his recent *Mind Control,* for instance, expresses a widespread fear that the practitioners of behavior-modification theory aspire to make a society of New Men in the interests of a more efficient and painless management of society: who do not want to drive us out of our dirty Phnom Penhs but want to structure our potential to the point where we can live uncomplainingly in them. Schrag worries about the threat to individual autonomy posed by therapeutic techniques and psychotropic drugs, but here he opposes one of the most compelling of all definitions of the high-quality life in our society: one that places the highest value on the absence of tension, conflict, and contradiction; on the closing of the gap between ideal and real, continuous and discrete, desire and experience, potential and actualization, standard and practice, male and female, nature and culture, quality and quantity. Like the late Charles A. Lindbergh, who once on a misty morning sat in the mouth of a Tasaday cave wondering "what qualities were missing in the ways of civilized men," we ask ourselves whether in the final analysis it is not primitive that is beautiful. Meanwhile, not having a ready answer, we invest our hopes in biofeedback, genetic engineering, and Rolfing, make millionaires out of carpetbagging Oriental holy men, advertise for soul mates in the back pages of the *New York Review of Books,* and dream of the endless placidities of the androgyne. Or we consume seconal, valium, and librium as avidly as bullfrogs consume bottle flies, hoping thereby to achieve an equilibrium with our nature that, perhaps, was ours to begin with when we were no more or no less than the gentle Tasadays.

VI

The dying Freud, who knew nothing of the Tasaday but who was himself something of a neo-stoic, wrote that you cannot have civilization without its discontents, from which it follows (if civilization is admitted to be a qualitative arrangement of human affairs) that a sense of quality depends on the perception and acceptance of the gap between quality and quantity, and that the closing of the gap implies the annihilation of both terms and therefore of history itself, which is possible only because there is distance and therefore tension between them. It is the discovery of the dimensions of this gap, as a consequence of what we like to call consciousness-raising programs, that is responsible for the conviction that a high-quality life is not possible within the gap-structured and tension-generating middle-class capitalist system, the contradictions of which are masked by hypocrisies and maintained by illegitimate power. Hence the late countercultural effort to establish outside the contaminated official culture a life of pure quality—that is to say, a life that is utterly and continuously satisfactory. Unfortunately, the effort to make such a life, generally by way of a plastic openness to experience, could only aggravate the dependence on quantity and therefore the gap between the two, just as a self-conscious effort to achieve peace of mind only aggravates one's nervousness by focusing attention on the factors that oppose it. A dependence on such short-term gap closers as drugs, rock music, and liberated sex was therefore inevitable: for the intoxicated no less than the fanatic experience that wholeness of being that belongs to the gods.

Indeed, in our society the effort to close gaps and resolve contradictions is a luxury made possible by the very affluence that helped to aggravate, if not produce, the gaps and contradictions to begin with. The counterculture, like Thoreau's experiment in high-quality living, was possible in great part because at a particular time it was something American society could afford; and what American society can afford is always likely to be contaminated by the assumption that quality and quantity are synonyms. One of the most likely counterassumptions (a by-product of this contamination) is that they are antonyms, an assumption that generally proves workable in proportion as it is subsidized. Inescapably, then, there was a playboy spirit in the counterculture's effort to experience pure quality. Thoreau too, in his own transcendental way, was something of a playboy. In the language of the *Playboy* brochure, "he lacks many of the social and mental inhibitions that burdened the last generation"—a description which, in a somewhat different context, would satisfy the expectations of Stavrianos and Pol Pot. At the present moment, the latter's New Man may appear to be moved by anything but the playboy spirit, but in the ironic whirligig of time he may still prove to be the strenuous effort that subsidizes playboys yet unborn.

Stoics whether old or new are not much given to dreams in which gaps close and contradictions are resolved; their inclination is to see such dreams as the mocking, not the beginning, of reality. Certainly Kahn is not much compelled by the dream of a New Man; neo-stoically, like Freud, he wants to help the Old Man survive, even at the cost of perpetuating the civilization of his discontents. If he is optimistic, it is "at the material level with important subjective problems." "Wealth,"

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he says, "is not necessarily good for people." He obviously believes that it is morally imperative to help the Third World get richer, but he does not promise "that if you're rich you'll be better off. In fact, . . . the miseries of the future are likely to be due to the ambiguities of wealth, rather than to the pressures of poverty."

He might just as well have linked the miseries of the future with the ambiguities of quality. Indeed, the pursuit of the high-quality life, however defined, is probably as responsible for the discontents of civilization as any other factor. In our world, perhaps in any world, to pursue quality with single-minded passion under whatever banner—even under the banner of justice—is ultimately to pursue the perfect society, and to date most such pursuits, being more concerned with quality than with people, have involved some form of triage, since they tend to discover very quickly that nothing impedes them more than mere body count.

The playwright Eugene Ionesco, noting the failure "all along the line" of utopian socialist experiments, and wondering whether such experiments "do not illustrate an unknown, unconscious need for self-destruction," concludes in an *Encounter* essay that "Societies should be imperfect, otherwise it is death for the individual." Clearly, he fears the intolerance of imperfection that has engaged the attention of France's anti-Marxist "new philosophers," and that Voegelin has identified as a mark of the Gnostic deformation of consciousness. This deformation manifests itself in extremist and utopian forms in the political realm as a refusal to accept what Voegelin, following Plato, calls the "In-Between" of human existence, that tense and striving intermediate status between the human and the divine. "If anything is constant in the history of humankind," he writes, "it is the language of tension between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timelessness, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence."

Imprisoned in the imperfect "In-Between," caught between quality and quantity in the changing seasons of our discontent, the discontented Gnostics among us place little value on that quality of life we know as privacy—without which, as Ionesco sees it, there cannot be the diversity of individuals that makes true brotherhood possible. Certainly Stravrianos's New Man does not aim at privacy any more than the gentle Tasadays do. Like Robespierre and Lenin before him, he aims at the perfectly just society, the vision of which leads Ionesco to exclaim that "the most mixed-up liberalism is infinitely preferable." And only in the synergy of a true brotherhood, one might conclude, is the mixed-up quality of the human condition endurable.

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Character in the Bible

Robert Alter

How does the Bible manage to evoke such a sense of depth and complexity in its representation of character with what would seem to be such sparse, even rudimentary means? Biblical narrative offers us, after all, nothing in the way of minute analysis of motive or detailed rendering of mental processes; whatever indications we may be vouchsafed of feeling, attitude, or intention are rather minimal; and we are given only the barest hints about the physical appearance, the tics and gestures, the dress and implements of the characters, the material milieu in which they enact their destinies. In short, all the indicators of nuanced individuality to which the Western literary tradition has accustomed us—preeminently in the novel, but ultimately going back to the Greek epics and romances—would appear to be absent from the Bible. In what way, then, is one to explain how, from these laconic texts, figures like Rebekkah, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, Tamar, Moses, Saul, David, and Ruth emerge, characters who, beyond any archetypal role they may play as bearers of a divine mandate, have been etched as indelibly vivid individuals in the imagination of a hundred generations?

It is true enough to say, as Erich Auerbach and others have done, that the sparely sketched foreground of biblical narrative somehow implies a large background dense with possibilities of interpretation, but the critical issue here is the specific means through which that "somehow" is achieved. Though biblical narrative is often silent where later modes of fiction will choose to be loquacious, it is *selectively* silent in a purposeful way: about different personages, or about the same personages at different junctures of the narration, or about different aspects of their thought, feeling, behavior. I would suggest, in fact, that the biblical writers, while seeming to preserve a continuity with the relatively simple treatment of character of their Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian literary predecessors, actually worked out a set of new and surprisingly supple techniques for the imaginative representation of human individuality.

Since art does not develop in a vacuum, these literary techniques must be associated with the conception of human nature implicit in biblical monotheism: every person is created by an all-seeing God but abandoned to his own unfathomable freedom, made in God's likeness as a matter of cosmogonic principle but almost never as a matter of accomplished ethical fact; and each individual instance of this bundle of paradoxes, encompassing the zenith and the nadir of the created world, requires a special cunning attentiveness in literary representation. The purposeful selectivity of means, the repeatedly contrastive or comparative technical strategies used in the rendering of biblical characters, are in a sense dictated by the biblical view of man.

All this will become clearer through illustration. I would like to focus on a series of related passages from the story of David, the most complex and elaborately presented of biblical characters. A consideration of the entire literary portrait of David would take far too much space, but in order to see how the Bible's artful selectivity produces both sharply defined surfaces and a sense of ambiguous depths in character, it will suffice to follow David's unfolding relationship with his wife Michal, which also involves his relation to Saul, to his subsequent wives, and to his men. Michal is introduced into the narrative shortly after David, a young man from the provincial town of Bethlehem, has made his debut as a military hero and won the adulation of the people (I Samuel 18). We have just been informed, in a pointed pun, that the spirit of the Lord, now with David, has "turned away" from Saul and that the troubled king has "turned David away" from his presence by sending him into battle as a front-line commander. What follows is worth quoting at length because, as the initial presentation of David and Michal's relationship, it offers a small spectrum of nicely differentiated means of characterization:

14. David succeeded in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. 15. Saul saw that he suc-

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ceeded remarkably and was afraid of him. 16. But all Israel and Judah loved David for he led them in battle. 17. Saul said to David, "Here is my oldest daughter, Merab; her shall I give you as a wife. But you must be a good warrior for me and fight the Lord's battles." And Saul was thinking, "Let not my hand strike him down, let it be the hand of the Philistines." 18. David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life, my father's family in Israel, that I should become the son-in-law of the king?" 19. But at the time Merab the daughter of Saul should have been given to David, she was given as a wife to Adriel the Meholathite. 20. And Michal the daughter of Saul loved David; this was told to Saul and he was pleased. 21. And Saul thought, "I shall give her to him and she can be a snare to him, so that the hand of the Philistines can strike him down." And Saul said to David, "Through the second one* you can now become my son-in-law." 22. Saul instructed his retainers, "Speak to David privately in these words—'The king desires you, all his subjects love you, and so now become the king's son-in-law.'" 23. Saul's retainers repeated these words to David, and David said, "Is it a little thing in your eyes to become the king's son-in-law, and I am a pauper, a man of little consequence?" 24. Saul's retainers told him, "These were the words David spoke." 25. Saul said, "This is what you should say to David—'The king desires no bride price but a hundred Philistine foreskins to take vengeance against the enemies of the king.'" And Saul intended to bring David down by the hand of the Philistines. 26. His retainers repeated these words to David, and David was pleased by the thing, to become the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired,* 27. David arose and went off, he and his men with him, and killed two hundred Philistines. David brought back their foreskins and counted them out* for the king in order to become his son-in-law, and Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife. 28. Saul realized that the Lord was with David, while Michal the daughter of Saul loved him. 29. Saul feared David all the more, and Saul was David's constant enemy. 30. The Philistine chieftains came out to do battle, but whenever they came out, David succeeded beyond all Saul's retainers, and his name became very great.

Now, in reliable third-person narrations, such as in the Bible, there is a scale of means, in ascending order of explicitness and certainty, for conveying information about the motives, the attitudes, the moral nature of characters. Character can be revealed through the report of actions; through appearance, gestures, posture, costume; through one character's comments on another; through direct speech by the character; through inward speech, either summarized or quoted as interior monologue; or through statements by the narrator about the attitudes and intentions of the personages, which may come either as flat assertions or motivated explanations.

The lower end of this scale—character revealed through actions or appearance—leaves us substantially in the realm of inference. The middle categories, involving direct speech either by a character himself or by others about him, lead us from inference to the weighing of claims. Although a character's own statements might seem a straightforward enough revelation of who he is and what he makes of things, in fact the biblical writers are quite as aware as any James or Proust that speech may reflect the occasion more than the speaker, may be more a drawn shutter than an open window. With the report of inward speech, we enter the realm of relative certainty about character: there is certainty, in any case, about the character's conscious intentions, though we may still feel free to question the motive behind the intention. Finally, at the top of the ascending scale, we have the reliable narrator's explicit statement of what the characters feel, intend, desire; here we are accorded certainty, though biblical narrative, as the passage before us demonstrates, may choose for its own good purposes either to explain the ascription of attitude or to state it baldly and thus leave its cause as an enigma for us to ponder.

With all this in mind, if we return to our passage from I Samuel 18, we can readily see how the writer, far from being committed to a monolithic or "primitive" method of characterization, shrewdly varies his means of presentation from one personage to the next. Like many biblical episodes, the passage has a formal frame: David is said to be eminently successful, which is both proof and consequence of God's being with him, and immensely popular because of his success, both at the beginning of the episode and at the end; and if, as I would assume, this passage was written later than Genesis 39, the story of Joseph, another precocious high-achiever in trouble, it probably alludes to that chapter from Genesis, which is similarly framed by verses at the beginning and end that stress the hero's success, God's being with him, and his popularity. In any case, the frame-verses here tell us something about David's divine election to the newly created throne of Israel, but nothing about his moral character, and one of the most probing general perceptions of the biblical writers is that there is often a tension, sometimes perhaps even an absolute contradiction, between election and moral character. But it is important for the writer to leave this tension under a shadow of ambiguity in order to suggest a complex sense of David the private person and public man. David, then, remains a complete opacity in this episode, while Saul is a total transparency and Michal a sliver of transparency surrounded by darkness.

The means of presenting Saul are drawn from

* Textual uncertainty in the Hebrew.

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the top of our ascending scale of certainties. The narrator tells us exactly what Saul feels toward David—fear—and why he feels it—David's astonishing military success (in this instance, the parataxis of "Saul saw . . . and was afraid" is a clear causal indication). We are given Saul's decorous public speech to David (verse 17), but his words are immediately commented on and exposed by a revelation of his inward speech in which he plots David's death. (In the Hebrew, these transitions from outward to inward speech are effected more elegantly and more pointedly because the same verb, *amr*, is used to introduce both actual speech and thought or intention.) The next discussion of betrothal between Saul and David (verse 21) neatly reverses this order: first we get the interior monologue of the plotting king, then his decorous statement to the intended victim of his scheme. By the time we are given Saul's words to be conveyed by his henchmen, who are probably not conscious accomplices, to David, we know exactly what is behind those words.

As elsewhere in the Bible, attention is directed toward the use of language as a medium of manipulation. To make sure that we do not forget even momentarily just what Saul is up to, the narrator intervenes in his own voice in the second half of verse 27, after Saul's stipulation of bride-price, to tell us what the king's real intention is. The transparency of presentation might even be intended to imply a transparency in Saul's efforts as a Machiavellian schemer: he is a simple character, inclined to clumsy lunges rather than deft thrusts, and perhaps for that reason not *political* enough to retain the throne. Does David himself see through the king's scheme and decide to play along because he is confident he can overcome all dangers and bring back the gory bride-price? This is one of several key determinations concerning the characters about which the text leads us to speculate without providing sufficient information to draw any certain conclusions.

Michal leaps out of the void as a name, a significant relation—Saul's daughter—and an emotion—her love for David. This love, twice stated here, is bound to have special salience because it is the only instance in all biblical narrative in which we are explicitly told that a woman loves a man. But unlike Saul's fear, Michal's love is stated entirely without motivated explanation; this does not mean, of course, that it is inexplicable, only that the writer wants us to conjecture about it. The people love David because of his brilliance on the battlefield; Michal might love him for the same reason, or for qualities not yet intimated, or because of aspects of her own character about which we will begin to guess only later.

The means used to represent David, meanwhile, are deliberately limited to the lower and middle range of our ascending scale of certainties. We know in a general way about his actions in battle, we know what others feel about him, but there is no ascription of feeling, as in the case of Michal, no revelation of interior speech and intention, as with Saul. What we are given is David's speech, first to Saul, later to Saul's intermediaries. These are strictly public occasions, and the words David chooses for them are properly diplomatic. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the entire David story is that until his career reaches its crucial breaking point with his murder-by-proxy of Uriah after his adultery with Bathsheba, almost all his speeches are in public situations and can be read as politically motivated. It is only after the death of the child born of his union with Bathsheba that the personal voice of a shaken David begins to emerge.*

What does David feel, what is he really thinking, when he responds to Saul or to Saul's spokesmen? Does he genuinely feel humble as a poor Ephraimite farm boy suddenly taken up by the court? Is he merely following the expected effusive formulas of court language in these gestures of self-effacement before the king? Or, guessing the king's intention but confident he has a stronger hand to play than Saul realizes, is he through his protestations of unworthiness being careful not to appear too eager to marry into the royal family because of what such a desire might suggest about his political ambitions? The narrator leaves these various "readings" of David hovering by presenting his public utterance without comment, and in this way is able to suggest the fluctuating or multiple nature of motives in this prime biblical instance of man as a political animal. One or all of these considerations might explain David's words; precisely by not specifying, the narrator allows each its claim.

THE subsequent episodes of the David-Michal story consistently maintain this studied effect of opacity in the presentation of the warrior-king, and may be touched on more briefly. In the next chapter (I Samuel 19), Saul sends his henchmen to David and Michal's house in order to ambush David when he comes out in the morning. In some unspecified way, the alert Michal learns of the plot and warns David in these urgent, compact words: "If you don't escape tonight, tomorrow you're a dead man." This is immediately followed neither by a verbal response from David nor by any indication of what he feels, but only by Michal's brisk action and David's emphatic compliance: "Michal lowered David through the window and he went off and fled and escaped." These three verbs for the one in Michal's breathless instructions underline David's singleminded attention to the crucial business of saving himself.

* Scholarly opinion still tends to assume, on rather tenuous stylistic and form-critical grounds, that there is a separate "Succession Narrative" which begins in II Samuel 13, but the evidence for a unified imaginative conception of the whole David story is persuasive.

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Michal, meanwhile, is wily enough to cover David's escape by improvising a dummy in bed out of the household idols (*terafim*) covered with a cloth and a goat's-hair bolster for a head. This is obviously an allusion to Rachel, who in fleeing with Jacob from her father (Genesis 31), steals Laban's *terafim* and hides them under the camel-pillow when he comes to search her tent. Perhaps the allusion is meant to foreshadow a fatality shared by Michal with Rachel, who becomes the object of Jacob's unwitting curse because of the theft; what is certain is that the allusion reinforces our sense of Michal as a woman who has renounced allegiance to her father in her devotion to her husband. For when Saul, finding that David has slipped out of his hands, castigates his daughter for her treachery, Michal coolly turns around her own words to David and her actions of the previous night and pretends that David threatened her, saying, "Help me get away or I'll kill you."

It is noteworthy that the only words purportedly spoken by David to Michal are merely her invention, to protect herself. So far, their relationship has been literally and figuratively a one-sided dialogue. First we were told twice that she loved him while all that could be safely inferred about his attitude toward her was that the marriage was politically useful. Now she vigorously demonstrates her love, and the practical intelligence behind it, by her words and actions at a moment of crisis, while the text, faithful to its principle of blocking access to the private David, envelops him in silence, representing him only as a man in mortal danger who goes off, flees, and escapes.

David, after putting Saul's homicidal intentions to the test one last time with the help of his friend Jonathan, heads for the badlands, accompanied by a band of tough fighting men disaffected from Saul. Michal now disappears from the scene. Bare mention of her occurs only at the end of I Samuel 25, in connection with David's taking another two wives. The happily widowed Abigail, another of those extraordinarily enterprising and practical biblical women, has just been seen taking off after David in a chain of verbs: "Abigail hurried and got up and rode on her donkey, her five maids in attendance, and went after David's messengers and became his wife." This is followed by an observation about David's matrimonial activity (probably to be construed as a pluperfect), which leads the narrator at last to inform us what has happened to Michal while David has been on the lam: "David had taken Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them became his wives, while Saul had given his daughter Michal, the wife of David, to Palti the son of Laish from Gallim." Michal, last observed as a forceful initiator of action, now stands in contrast to the energetically active Abigail as an object acted upon, passed by her father from one man to another. The dubious legality of Saul's action is perhaps intimated by the use of the epithet "wife of David"; the motive, of course, for marrying off his daughter to someone else is political, in order to demonstrate, however clumsily, that David has no bond of kinship with the royal family and hence no claim to the throne. What Michal feels about this transaction, or about the absent David and his new wives of whom she may have heard, we are not told. The text is similarly silent about Palti's feelings—indeed, about his very identity—though he will later have his brief moment of memorable revelation.

The strategy of setting up a screen around David's intimate responses is deployed with almost teasing provocation a few chapters later (I Samuel 30) when Abigail and Ahinoam, together with the wives and children of all David's men, are taken off as captives in an Amalekite raid on his headquarters at Ziklag. Returning from a sortie, David and his men find their town burned and their wives and children gone. David's reaction is reported with the most artful ambiguity: "David and the people with him cried out and wept until they had no more strength to weep. David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail, wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed, for the people wanted to stone him, for all the people were embittered over their sons and daughters."

First there is the public expression of grief, the long fit of weeping, in which David naturally participates. Then we are informed that his two wives are among the captives, and in the paratactic flow of the verses, with no sentence divisions in the original text, it is easy enough to read this as cause and effect: "David's wives had been taken . . . and David was greatly distressed." The idiom I have translated as "distressed" (*vatetzer l'*) can refer either to a feeling of distress or to the objective condition of being in straits, in physical danger, and the next clause, "for the people wanted to stone him," pirouettes on the ambiguity and turns around to the second meaning. Where we thought we had a spontaneous expression of David's grief over the loss of his wives, we are again confronted with David the political leader in a tight corner, struggling to save both himself and the situation—which he promptly does by a devastating counterattack on the Amalekites in which the captives are rescued. It is not that we are led to infer any clear absence of personal feeling in David, but that again the private person has been displaced through the strategy of presentation of the public man, and the intimate David remains opaque.

MICHAL returns to the story as the result of a series of decisive political developments (II Samuel 3). Saul has died, and after a bitter civil war, Abner, his commander-in-chief, is prepared to sue for peace with David, who makes it a precondition to negotiations that he be given back his wife Michal, "whom I betrothed

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with a hundred Philistine foreskins." This bloody reminder is meant to stress the legitimacy of David's right to Michal, for whom he has paid the full bride-price stipulated by her father, and that emphasis suggests it is not any personal bond but political calculation, Michal's utility as a means of reinforcing David's claim to the allegiance of Saul's subjects, which makes him insist on her return.

His demand is promptly met by Saul's son: "Ish-Bosheth sent and had her taken from a man, Paltiel the son of Laish. Her man went with her, walking after her and weeping, as far as Bahurim. Abner then said to him, 'Go back!' and he went back." The remarkable suggestiveness of the Bible's artistic economy could scarcely be better illustrated. This is all we ever know of Palti the son of Laish. He appears from the darkness to weep for his wife and to follow her, until he is driven back forever into the darkness by a man of power with whom he cannot hope to contend. He is called twice in close sequence Michal's man or husband *(ish)*, a title to which at least his feelings give him legitimate claim, and which echoes ironically against David's use in the preceding verse of *ishti*, my wife or woman, to describe a relationship with Michal that is legal and political but perhaps not at all emotional on his side. The contrast between David, again speaking carefully weighed public words, and Palti, expressing private grief through publicly visible action, is pointed. As for Michal, who has been living for years as Palti's wife, we have no way of knowing whether she feels gratitude, love, pity, or contempt for her powerless second husband, though we may begin to guess that the feelings she now entertains toward David himself will be less than kindly.

The actual reunion between David and Michal is entirely suppressed, for the writer wants to leave us wondering a little longer while he attends to climactic political events (the murder of Abner, the end of the civil war, the conquest of Jerusalem), and thus to reserve the revelation of what their mutual attitudes now are for a final confrontation between them. The writer's artful sureness of selectivity in the means he adopts to present character is evident in the striking fact that until the final meeting between Michal and David, at no point is there any dialogue between them—an avoidance of verbal exchange particularly noticeable in the Bible, where such a large part of the burden of narration is taken up by dialogue. When that exchange finally comes, it is an explosion.

DAVID, having captured from the Jebusites the mountain stronghold that will be the capital of the dynasty he is founding, settles his family and entourage there and then personally leads the Ark of the Lord in a festive procession up to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6). Michal enters this picture as an unhappy spectator (verse 16): "As the Ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out the window and saw King David leaping and cavorting before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart." With a fine sense of the tactics of exposition, the narrator tells us exactly what Michal is feeling but not why. The hiatus in explanation, which will in part be filled by the ensuing dialogue, again opens the gates to multiple interpretation. The scorn for David welling up in Michal's heart is thus plausibly attributable in some degree to all of the following: the undignified public spectacle which David just now is making of himself; Michal's jealousy over the moment of glory David is enjoying while she sits alone, a neglected co-wife, back at the provisional palace; Michal's resentment over David's indifference to her all these years, over the other wives he has taken, over being torn away from the devoted Palti; David's dynastic ambitions—now clearly revealed in his establishing the Ark in the "City of David"—which will irrevocably displace the house of Saul. The distance between the spouses is nicely indicated here by the epithets chosen for each: she is the "daughter of Saul," and she sees him as the king. Michal's subsequent words to David seize on the immediate occasion, the leaping and cavorting, as the particular reason for her anger, but the biblical writer knows as well as any psychologically-minded modern that one's emotional reaction to an immediate stimulus can have a complicated prehistory, and by suppressing any causal explanation in his initial statement of Michal's scorn, he beautifully suggests its "overdetermined" nature, how it bears the weight of everything that has not been said but obliquely intimated about the relation between Michal and David.

There follow three verses which, leaving Michal in her fury at the window, describe in detail David's performance of his ceremonial functions as he offers sundry sacrifices, blesses the people, distributes delicacies. Then David returns to his house to bless—or perhaps the verb here means simply to greet—his own family:

> 20b. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and she said, "How honored today is the king of Israel, exposing himself before the eyes of his subjects' slavegirls as some worthless fellow might indeed expose himself!" 21. David said to Michal, "Before the Lord who chose me over your father and all his house to appoint me ruler of the Lord's people Israel, I will play before the Lord! 22. And I will dishonor myself even more than this and be base in my own eyes, and with the slavegirls you spoke of, with them will I be honored." 23. And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child till her dying day.

Michal, who at last must have her say with David, does not wait until he has actually entered the house but goes out to meet him (per-

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haps, one might speculate, with the added idea of having her words ring in the ears of his retinue outside). The exchange of whipsaw sarcasms between the two reflects the high-tension fusion of the personal and the political in their relationship. When Michal addresses David in the third person as king of Israel, it is not in deference to royalty but in insolent anger at this impossible man who does not know how to behave like a king. She makes David an exhibitionist in the technical, sexual sense ("as some worthless fellow might indeed expose himself": apparently his skirts were flying high as he cavorted before the Ark), stressing that the hungry eyes of the slavegirls have taken it all in—an emphasis which leads one to suspect there is a good deal of sexual jealousy behind what is ostensibly an objection to his lack of regal dignity. David responds to the daughter of Saul with a sonorous invocation of the Lord who has chosen him for the throne instead of Saul and his heirs. As divinely elected king, David is to be the judge of what is a decorous celebration before the Lord: he seizes Michal's sarcastic "honored," turns it into a defiant "I will dishonor myself" (the opposed Hebrew roots suggest etymologically "heavy" and "light"), then, hurling back to Michal the idea of how he has shown himself in the eyes of other women, insists that he will be honored by these lowly slavegirls for the behavior his wife thinks degrading. In all this, the writer is careful to conceal his own precise sympathies. He does not question the historically crucial fact of David's divine election, so prominently stressed by the king himself at the beginning of his speech, but theological rights do not necessarily justify domestic wrongs, and the anointed monarch of Israel may still be a harsh and unfeeling husband to the woman who has loved him and saved his life.

There is a strategically placed gap between the end of verse 22 and the beginning of verse 23. Michal, hardly a woman to swallow insults in silence, is refused the privilege of a reply to David, nor is there any indication of her inward response to this verbal assault. The breaking-off of the dialogue at this point is itself an implicit commentary. David has the last word because, after all, he has the power, as he has just taken pains to point out to Michal. The daughter of a rejected royal house and by now a consort of only marginal political utility to the popularly acclaimed king, and the least favored of three or more co-wives, Michal can do nothing, and perhaps has literally nothing more to say, about her rage against her husband. Verse 23, the last one in which Michal will be accorded any mention, is a kind of epilogue to the confrontation, fastened to it with the special kind of ambiguity to which biblical parataxis lends itself. (Modern translators generally destroy the fineness of the effect by rendering the initial "and" as "so.") The narrator states the objective fact of Michal's barrenness—in the ancient Near East, a woman's greatest misfortune—but carefully avoids any subordinate conjunction or syntactical signal that would indicate a clear causal connection between the fact stated and the dialogue that precedes it. A theologically minded reader, and certainly any advocate of the divine right of the Davidic dynasty, is invited to read this statement as a declaration that Michal was punished by God for her presumption in rebuking His anointed king over an act of royal and cultic ceremony. A reader attending more to the personal drama that has been enacted between Michal and David might justifiably conclude that after this furious exchange, David simply ceased to have conjugal relations with Michal and so condemned her to barrenness. Finally, the paratactic link between the two verses leaves the teasing possibility, however less likely than the other two readings, that we may presume too much altogether in seeing here any definite relation of cause and effect: we cannot be entirely certain that Michal's childlessness is not a bitter coincidence, the last painful twist of a wronged woman's fate.

I WOULD suggest that causation in human affairs is itself brought into a paradoxical double focus by the narrative techniques of the Bible. The biblical writers obviously exhibit, on the one hand, a profound belief in a strong, clearly demarcated pattern of causation in history and in individual lives, and many of the framing devices, the motif-structures, the symmetries and recurrences in their narratives reflect this belief. God directs, history complies; a person sins, a person suffers; Israel backslides, Israel falls. The very perception, on the other hand, of godlike depths, unsoundable capacities for good and evil, in human nature, also leads these writers to render their protagonists in ways that destabilize any monolithic system of causation, set off a fluid movement among different orders of causation, some of them complementary or mutually reinforcing, others even mutually contradictory. The mere possibility that there might be no clear casual connection between Michal's anger against David and her barrenness, though marginal, serves to unsettle the sense of straightforward, unilinear consequence to which lazy mental habits—ancient and modern—accustom us. The accidents befalling and the actions performed by man as a free agent created in God's image are more intricately layered, more deviously ramified, than many earlier and competing views of humanity might lead us to imagine, and the narrative technique of studied reticences which generate an interplay of significantly patterned ambiguities is a faithful translation into art of this view of man.

Every biblical narrator is of course omniscient, but in contrast, for example, to the narrator of

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the Homeric poems, who makes his characters beautifully perspicuous even (as in the *Iliad*) when he is dealing with the most darkly irrational impulses of the human heart, the ancient Hebrew narrator exercises his omniscience with a drastic selectivity. He may on occasion choose to privilege us with the knowledge of what God thinks of a particular character or action—omniscient narration can go no higher—but as a rule, because of his understanding of the nature of his human subjects, he leads us through varying darknesses which are lit up by intense but narrow beams, phantasmal glimmerings, sudden strobic flashes. We are compelled to get at character and motive, as in Impressionist writers like Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, through a process of inference from fragmentary data, often with crucial pieces of narrative exposition strategically withheld, and this leads to multiple or sometimes even wavering perspectives on the characters. There is, in other words, an abiding mystery in character as the biblical writers conceive it, which they embody in their typical methods of presentation.

This underlying approach to character is perhaps most easily seen in the capacity for change exhibited by the biblical personages who are treated at any length. Cognate with the biblical understanding of individual character as something which develops in and is transformed by time—preeminently in the stories of Jacob and David—is a sense of character as a center of surprise. This unpredictable and changing nature of character is one reason why biblical personages cannot have fixed Homeric epithets (Jacob is not "wily Jacob," Moses is not "sagacious Moses") but only relational epithets determined by the strategic requirements of the immediate context: Michal, as the circumstances vary, is either "daughter of Saul" or "wife of David."*

Achilles in the *Iliad* undergoes violent fluctuations of mood and attitude, first sulking in his tent, then transformed into a blind force of destruction by the death in battle of his lover Patroklos, then at the end brought back to his human senses by the pleas of the bereaved Priam, but there is a stable substratum of the man Achilles, and these are, after all, oscillations in feeling and action, not in character. David, on the other hand, in the many decades through which we follow his career, is first a provincial *ingénu* and public charmer, then a shrewd political manipulator and a tough guerrilla leader, later a helpless father floundering in the entanglements of his sons' intrigues and rebellion, a refugee suddenly and astoundingly abasing himself before the scathing curses of Shimei, then a doddering old man bamboozled by Bathsheba and Nathan, and, in still another surprise on his very deathbed, an implacable seeker of vengeance against the same Shimei whom he had forgiven after the defeat of Absalom's insurrection.

As a final illustration of how the Bible's strategies of narrative exposition reflect a sense of the unknowable and the unforeseeable in human nature, I would like to contrast two scenes of mourning, one from Homer, the other from the David story. Priam's confrontation of Achilles in the last book of the *Iliad* to beg for the body of his son Hektor is surely one of the most poignant moments in ancient literature. "I have gone through what no other mortal on earth has gone through," Priam concludes his plea to Achilles, "I put my lips to the hands of the man who has killed my children." Here are the first few lines, in the translation by Richmond Lattimore, that describe the effect of Priam's bold entreaty:

> So he spoke, and stirred in the other a passion of grieving for his own father. He took the old man's hand and pushed him gently away, and the two remembered, as Priam sat huddled at the feet of Achilles and wept close for man-slaughtering Hektor and Achilles wept now for his own father, now again for Patroklos. The sound of their mourning moved in the house.

The emotions of these two sadly remembering figures are as clearly exposed for us as their physical positions—old Priam huddled at the feet of the mighty young Achilles. In a moment Achilles will speak soft words of compassion to Priam. The transition from murderous rage to kindness is deeply moving yet not, in the biblical manner, surprising. Achilles' anger has estranged him from his own humanity, but, in the view of the Greek poet, there are universal emotions, universal facts of existence, shared by all men, and Priam's plea has reminded Achilles that though they are separated by enmity and age, they share identically in this human heritage of relation and feeling. All men have fathers, all men love, all must grieve when they lose those they love. Part of the power of the scene comes from the fact that the connection between these two figures, weeping together as each separately recalls his own lost ones, is so lucidly revealed through the narrator's simultaneous overview of the external scene and the inner experience of both characters.

In II Samuel 12, when David's first son by Bathsheba is stricken with an incurable illness, the king entreats God for the sake of the baby, fasting and sleeping on the ground. He refuses all sustenance for seven days, and when on the seventh day the child dies, his servants are afraid to tell him, assuming that if his behavior was so extreme while the child was still alive, he will go to even more extravagant lengths when he learns of the child's death.

*A similar observation on the lack of fixed epithets has been made by Shimon Bar-Efrat in a 1975 Hebrew University dissertation, *Literary Form in Biblical Narrative* (Hebrew).

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19. David saw that his servants were whispering to each other and he realized the child was dead, and he said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" and they answered, "Yes." 20. David then got up from the ground, bathed and anointed himself, changed his robe, went into the House of the Lord, prostrated himself, went home, asked for food, which was set before him, and he ate. 21. His servants said to him, "What is this thing you have done? For the living child you fasted and wept, and when the child died, you got up and ate food!" 22. He answered, "When the child was still alive I fasted and wept, for I thought, 'Who knows, perhaps the Lord will take pity on me and the child will live.' 23. But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I am going to him but he will not come back to me." 24. David consoled his wife Bathsheba. He came into her and lay with her, and she bore a son and named him Solomon, and the Lord loved him.

THE paradox of David's behavior in his grief is mirrored in the strategies of narrative exposition adopted to present it. The whispered words of the servants (which were directly reported in verse 18) prepare us for a terrific outburst from the king. Instead, as soon as he hears the monosyllabic confirmation of his worst suspicions, "Yes" (in the Hebrew, *met*, "dead"), he rises, and we see him in a rapid sequence of acts, conveyed in a chain of nine uninterrupted verbs, which are left entirely enigmatic until his simple, starkly eloquent words of explanation to the baffled servants. All men may indeed grieve over the loss of their loved ones, but this universal fact does not produce a universal response because the expression of feeling, the very experience of the feeling, takes place through the whorled and deeply grained medium of each person's stubborn individuality. As readers, we are quite as surprised as the servants by David's actions, then his words, for there is very little in the narrative before this point that could have prepared us for this sudden, yet utterly convincing, revelation of the sorrowing David, so bleakly aware of his own inevitable mortality as he mourns his dead son.

The exchange between David and the servants is cut off after his answer, without any dramatic closure. Their reaction is no longer of any interest, and, in typical biblical fashion, as we leap forward to the conjugal consoling of Bathsheba and the birth of the divinely favored son that balances out the death of the first child, we are given no hints from the narrator for the imaginative reconstruction of David's recovery from this bereavement. The symmetrically marked pattern of divine punishment for the founder of the Israelite dynasty followed by divine compensation frames the whole episode, but David, as his speech to the servants vividly illustrates, is a sentient person, not just a pawn in God's grand historical design, and about many facets of the person—in contrast to the Homeric heroes—we are left to wonder. But this sober moment of strange mourning will continue to echo in our memory, for we shall soon enough be provided in the stories of Amnon and Tamar, and of Absalom, with still more troubling instances of the aging David's anguish as a father.

The Greek tendency to narrative specification, as I suggested earlier, seems to be one that modern literary practice has by and large adopted and developed. Precisely for that reason, we have to readjust our habits as readers in order to bring an adequate attentiveness to the rather different narrative maneuvers that are characteristic of the Hebrew Bible. But the underlying biblical conception of character as often unpredictable, in some ways impenetrable, constantly emerging from and slipping back into a penumbra of ambiguity, in fact has greater affinity with dominant modern notions than do the habits of conceiving character typical of the Greek epics. The monotheistic revolution in consciousness profoundly altered the ways in which man as well as God was imagined, and the effects of that revolution probably still determine certain aspects of our conceptual world more than we suspect. This altered consciousness was of course expressed ideologically in the legislative and prophetic impulses of the Bible, but in biblical narrative it was also realized through the bold and subtle articulation of an innovative literary form. The narrative art of the Bible, then, is more than an aesthetic enterprise, and learning to read its fine calibrations may bring us closer than the broad-gauge concepts of intellectual history and comparative religion to a structure of imagination in whose shadow we still stand.

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Falsifying Jefferson

Kenneth S. Lynn

As Louis Hartz brilliantly pointed out in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), political theorists of the Left and the Right have always been frustrated by the fact that America skipped the feudal stage of history. The lack of a feudal experience means first of all that we lack a socialist tradition, for the hidden origin of socialist thought in Western societies, says Hartz, is to be found in the class consciousness of the feudal ethos. And the absence of a socialist tradition means in turn that we have never developed a tradition of reaction; lacking Robespierre, we also lack Maistre. What dominates our politics instead is a widely shared belief in the American Way of Life, which traces back through a series of transformations to revolutionary America's attachment to the liberalism of John Locke. Confronted by this maddeningly monolithic heritage, the disaffected analyst of modern American politics is hard put to discover home-grown precedents for an alternative philosophy of government. It therefore behooves him, says Hartz, to transcend the American past, rather than to attempt to recapture it. "As for a child who is leaving adolescence, there is no going home again for America."

The leftist (formerly rightist) writer Garry Wills, however, refuses to believe that America can't go home again. In his inventive new book, *Inventing America*,* he sets out to recapture the Declaration of Independence by reinterpreting it. Wills's thesis is that the Declaration is not grounded in Lockean individualism, as we have been accustomed to think, but is a communitarian manifesto deriving from the common-sense philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment—Kames, Hutcheson, Reid, Dugald Stewart, *et al.* It would have been a stunning accomplishment if Wills had succeeded in substantiating this bold proposition. At one stroke he would have altered our whole sense of the American experiment in self-government as Jefferson envisioned it. A new nation, conceived in liberty, would have been transmogrified into a new nation, conceived in communality.

But Wills does not build a credible case. Far from being a careful work of scholarship, *Inventing America* is the tendentious report of a highly political writer whose unannounced but nonetheless obvious aim is to supply the history of the Republic with as pink a dawn as possible. That his book has been prominently reviewed and lavishly praised—by academic authorities no less than by newspapermen—is a telling indication of the intellectual temper of the times. In an age of ideology, the inventions of ideologues have come to seem plausible, even though they are fantastic. *Inventing America* does not help us to understand Thomas Jefferson, but its totally unearned acclaim tells us a good deal about modern-day intellectuals and their terrible need for radical myths.

In the introduction he provided a couple of years ago to Lillian Hellman's *Scoundrel Time*, Wills spewed out a wholesale contempt for the political spirit of post-World War II America. The same lack of discrimination here marks his attitude toward previous commentators on Jefferson. From Abraham Lincoln to Erik Erikson, from Gilbert Chinard, Dumas Malone, Julian Boyd, and Howard Mumford Jones to Adrienne Koch, Daniel J. Boorstin, Merrill D. Peterson, and Fawn Brodie, no one is exempt from Wills's critical swipes. But his severest attacks are aimed at Carl Becker, for Becker's classic study, *The Declaration of Independence* (1922), is the principal obstacle in the path of his revisionism.

What has made Becker's book so conclusive, asks Wills, that even half a century later authorities on Jefferson have found nothing important to add to it? Merrill D. Peterson, he concedes, does express "misgivings" in *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (1960) about Becker's relativistic belief that the realities of the modern world have undermined the supposedly self-evident truths of the Declaration. Nevertheless, says Wills, Peterson agrees with every other well-known scholar in the field that Becker's book is a masterpiece—and the author of *Inventing America* is sure he knows why. "The secret of this universal acclaim lies in the inability of any later student to challenge Becker's basic thesis—that Jefferson found in *John Locke* [the emphasis is Wills's] 'the ideas which he put into the Declaration.'" Although Wills comes down very hard on what he refers to as the "misreadings" by other students of Jefferson, he himself is a spectacular misreader, surpassing even the redoubtable Fawn Brodie, as the foregoing quotations at least begin to make clear. Not only does Peterson not express misgivings about Becker's relativism, but it is not Becker's basic thesis that Jefferson found the ideas he put into the Declaration in the writings of John Locke. His thesis, rather, is that Jefferson found the Declaration's

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ideas in "the American mind," as Jefferson himself declared he did.

Becker's exposition begins with the important reminder that the document which we call the Declaration of Independence did not represent the formal act of separation from Great Britain—that step had already been taken by the Continental Congress on July 2, 1776—but was an argument designed to convince a "candid world" that the separation was necessary and right. According to Becker, the argument rests on two premises: (1) that all men have imprescriptible natural rights; (2) that the British empire is a voluntary federation of independent states. Jefferson did not dream up these premises for the occasion, Becker emphasizes. The doctrine of natural rights had long been regarded as a commonplace. The theory that the British empire was a federal union and that Parliament had no authority over the colonies was more novel, having arisen out of the decade-long dispute with Britain over colonial rights. Yet by the summer of 1776, this theory too was being taken for granted.

In later years, John Adams made the Declaration's lack of intellectual originality a ground for minimizing Jefferson's achievement: "There is not an idea in it," Adams wrote to Timothy Pickering, "but what had been hackneyed in Congress for two years before." Becker contends, however, that this criticism is wholly irrelevant, since the strength of the Declaration was precisely that it said what most colonists were thinking. Nothing would have been more futile than an attempt to justify a revolution on principles which no one had ever heard of before. As Jefferson patiently explained in 1825, the year before his death, his task in the Declaration had been

> not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before, but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent. . . . Neither aiming at originality of principles or sentiments, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind. . . . All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc.

It was not a path-breaking philosopher, or even the disciple of one, who was asked to draft the Declaration, but a writer who combined an extraordinary intellectual sensitivity with what John Adams called "a peculiar felicity of expression," and who could therefore be counted on to state the American case with uncommon clarity and eloquence.

Both in its form and in its phraseology, the Declaration so closely follows certain sentences in the second of Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* that Becker was convinced that Jefferson had not merely "absorbed" the ideas of the *Treatise* secondhand, the way other colonists had, but had read the text several times over. Yet while he found it "interesting" to establish this connection, Becker was more concerned with the question of why Jefferson and his contemporaries were ready to be impressed by the Whig apologist for the Revolution of 1688. Unlike Garry Wills, who talks about Jefferson's mind as if it were a blob of hot sealing wax passively submitting to the imprint of European ideas, Becker believed that "Generally speaking, men are influenced by books which clarify their own thought, which express their own notions well, or which suggest to them ideas which their minds are already predisposed to accept." Therefore, anyone interested in the origin of the Declaration's ideas must look for "the origin of those common underlying preconceptions that made the minds of many men, in different countries, run along the same track in their political thinking." In making that search, Becker found a congruence between the American rebellion against George the Third and the protracted parliamentary struggle with the monarchy in 17th-century England. A strong antipathy to kings predisposed the spokesman for the American mind, as it had predisposed Locke, to turn toward some new sanction for political authority. The Lockean philosophy in the Declaration expressed American notions well.

BECAUSE Becker's book adheres to Jefferson's own commentary on the Declaration, Wills has to explain away the latter in order to discredit the former. Thus he begins his critique with an attempt to minimize Jefferson's statement that the Declaration is an expression of the American mind. Jefferson was "probably referring," says Wills, only to the list of grievances which makes up the lengthiest part of the Declaration, and not to the preamble. There is not a shred of evidence—not even the slightest hint of ambiguity—to justify this notion. Jefferson's 1825 commentary (which Wills erroneously says was written in 1814) straightforwardly refers to the document as a whole. Nevertheless, Wills claims to see a distinction because he is determined to turn an argument based on the imprescriptible rights of individuals into an enunciation of brotherhood, and this effort requires him to do whatever he can to separate Jefferson's thinking from that of his more humdrum compatriots. Wills's reinterpretation of the Declaration consists in large part of an analysis of passages which precede the list of grievances; therefore, he cannot bring himself to admit that these passages merely express generally accepted sentiments of the day, rather than the very special vision of a very special man. All that one can say in defense of Wills in this matter is that at least he has the restraint to offer his novel idea as no more than probably true. Twenty-five pages later, alas, restraint vanishes: "Jefferson was expressing a common American mind on the concrete grievances that filled the practical debates at Philadelphia." That the rest of the document also expresses the American mind has been dropped into oblivion.

Another statement in Jefferson's commentary that Wills finds acutely embarrassing is the assertion that a portion of the Declaration's authority rests on ideas in "the

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elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc." Wills dearly wishes, of course, that Jefferson had not mentioned Locke's name, and he does his best to contain the damage by arguing that Jefferson "is deliberately citing works of general regard, rather than a set of specific influences on him." But the whole point of Jefferson's commentary is that the American mind was the specific influence on him, and that that influence was compounded of conversation, letters, essays, and books, including Locke's.

Wills's main assault on Becker is on his literary criticism. Becker said that a number of phrases in the Declaration echoed phrases in Locke's second *Treatise on Government*, but he failed to single them out. To Wills, this means that they do not exist. There is no verbal echo of the *Treatise* in the Declaration, says Wills. "There is, indeed, no demonstrable verbal echo of the *Treatise* in all of Jefferson's vast body of writings." With this statement Wills challenges Becker's scholarly authority in the teeth of his supposed strength, for throughout his career Becker was repeatedly praised for his sensitivity to other people's writings as well as for his own exceedingly graceful literary style. Yet if Becker were alive today, he would have no trouble defending himself, thanks to the fact that the Declaration contains many parallels to Locke, as two examples will suggest.

1. Jefferson says that "all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed." In the corresponding passage in his *Treatise*, Locke says that "the People, who are more disposed to suffer than right themselves by Resistance, are not apt to stir."

2. Jefferson says, "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. . . ." Locke says, "But if a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the People. . . ."

In the light of such comparisons, there can be little doubt that Becker was right when he said that Jefferson, "having read Locke's *Treatise*, was so taken with it that he read it again, and still again, so that afterwards its very phrases reappear in his own writing."

In *Inventing America*, Wills gets to show us what he can do as a literary critic. Indeed, he is virtually compelled to show us, for external evidence of the ideas that were on Jefferson's mind at the time he wrote the Declaration is in extraordinarily short supply. On February 1, 1770, the twenty-six-year-old Jefferson suffered a catastrophe. His house in Albemarle burned to the ground, together with his books and papers. In the ensuing six years he not only failed to reconstruct a written record of his early life, but did not write nearly as many letters about his current activities as we would like to have had. This means that Wills, in order to convince us of the Scottish Enlightenment's formative influence on the mind of the Declaration's author, has to resort to textual analysis of the document itself. Wills does his best to marshal other evidence in addition, but it is woefully thin, especially since Jefferson's retrospective commentary of 1825 is of no help to his interpretation.

In an attempt to extract some supporting facts from Jefferson's college days, Wills points out that William Small, Jefferson's favorite teacher at William and Mary, was a Scotsman who had studied with John Gregory, the center of a philosophical circle in Aberdeen in the 1750's. Small taught practically everything during Jefferson's years as an undergraduate. But Wills cannot pin down what, precisely, Small imparted to Jefferson. In Scotland, says Wills, men like Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith used the ethics course to expound their central philosophical tenets, connecting them with the sciences through mathematics and with rhetoric through a philosophy of beauty. "This seems to be," says Wills—and the tentativeness of his language reveals that he does not really know—what Small attempted in his course on Ethics, Rhetoric, and Belles-Lettres. Yet even if it was, we do not know that the young Jefferson was impressed by what he learned about political science from the ideas of Hutcheson and Smith. In *The Commonplace Book*, which represents the notes taken by Jefferson on law, political science, and religion starting from the time when he was either a student of law or a young lawyer, there are no entries from the works of Hutcheson or Smith and no citation of either name. There is, on the other hand, an entry from Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1751), which Jefferson would trot out many years later in refutation of the theories of Adam Smith (see the letter to John W. Eppes, November 6, 1813). The fact that Jefferson copied Postlethwayt but not Smith into his *Commonplace Book* does not encourage belief in the idea that the mind of the man who wrote the Declaration was shaped by Scottish thinkers.

In 1764, the year of William Small's return to Scotland, Wills doggedly continues, the Scottish philospher Thomas Reid, a figure on the Aberdeen scene, published his *Inquiry Into the Human Mind.* Small was "bound to have met" Reid upon his return, and the gossip about Aberdeen philosophers that Small relayed to his former student in America (how Wills knows that he relayed such gossip, I have no idea) "must have made" Jefferson greet the publication of Reid's book with special interest. Once again, Wills's phrasing indicates that he is just guessing. Jefferson's *Commonplace Book* has nothing in it from the *Inquiry,* or from any other book by Reid, and makes no reference to his name. The *Inquiry* does appear on a long list of books drawn up by Jefferson for his friend Robert Skipwith in 1771, but this scarcely justifies Wills's conclusion that Jefferson "came to know" Reid's book some time before the drawing up of the Skipwith list. Wills's further statement that Jefferson's knowledge of Reid grew through his friendship with Reid's student, Dugald Stewart, is irrelevant to the question of Reid's influence on the Declaration, because Jefferson did not come

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to know Stewart until many years later.

Wills mainly tries to persuade us of the truth of his thesis by the force of textual analysis. Unfortunately for him, he is neither sensitive to literature nor sensible about it. He first reveals his deficiencies as a literary critic in the prologue to *Inventing America*. In the midst of criticizing Abraham Lincoln for what Wills regards as a romantic misreading of the Declaration, he pauses to pay tribute to the stylistic powers of the author of the Gettysburg Address. "Abraham Lincoln was a great and conscious verbal craftsman. The man who writes, 'The world will little note, nor long remember, what we do here,' has done his best—by mere ripple and interplay of liquids—to make sure the world will remember; as it has." But what the world remembers is that Lincoln said, "what we say here." The tin-eared critic then proceeds to mangle the music of the First Inaugural: "The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union. . . ." How could any student of the American language not know that those were "chords" that would yet swell the chorus of the Union?

Hard upon the heels of misquotation comes critical absurdity. "Thomas Jefferson . . . was not, like Lincoln, a 19th-century romantic living in the full glow of transcendentalism (that school of faintly necrophiliac spirituality)." But the full glow of transcendentalism had faded by the time Lincoln became a national political figure, and in any event he had no interest in its doctrines. As for the alleged necrophilia of the so-called transcendentalist "school," I assume Wills means Emerson, the poet of the blowing clover and the falling rain, and Thoreau, the celebrator of vernal renewals. The charge that these writers were a little in love with dead bodies or carrion is altogether grotesque.

Wills's literary criticism gets down to Jeffersonian cases in the chapter dealing with the Declaration's opening phrase: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary. . . ." This opening is "Newtonian," we are told. "It lays down the law. . . . In the flow of things there is perceivable necessity, a fixity within flux." With these words, Wills launches into an eighteen-page discussion of 18th-century science, strewing references to Diderot, Rittenhouse, Dr. Arbuthnot, Chastellux, Francis Hutcheson, Antoine Le Camus, J. L. Moreau de la Sarthe, Voltaire, Daniel Defoe, and Newton, among others, as he goes. Finally, in the closing paragraph, we return to the text of the Declaration. If Jefferson did not mean the opening phrase of the Declaration in a Newtonian sense, Wills astonishingly declares, then he has "seriously misled us," for he knew well "how large the claim was when he spoke of the separation of one people from another as 'necessary.'" At the last possible moment, in other words, Wills confronts the possibility that the flat statement with which he had begun the chapter may not be true after all. Driven into a corner by his inability to substantiate his claim, he responds to this threat to his intellectual reputation by impugning Jefferson's. If, in *Nixon Agonistes*, Wills shows real insight into Nixon's trapped-rat psychology, it may be because he shares it.

A less combative critic would have pointed out that in the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of "necessary" in the modest sense of "needful to be done," two of the six examples given are from the 17th century and two are from the 18th. To the world of Jefferson, "necessary" had more than one meaning, and the opening of the Declaration is not prima facie Newtonian. Which meaning did the author and his audience have in mind? When we look at the accompanying verb, "becomes," we have our answer. Fixities within fluxes do not "become."

The aim of this opening exercise in textual analysis is to get us in an 18th-century mood for what is to follow. Becker had emphasized that a 17th-century inspiration lay behind the political theory and practice of revolutionary America. But Wills wants us to regard the Declaration as a thoroughly modern document, smacking of science, and suffused with the communitarianism of the Scottish Enlightenment. According to Wills, the principal difference between Locke and the Scottish thinkers is that Locke conceived of man in a state of nature as an autonomous entity, whereas Kames, Hutcheson, Stewart, and company believed that pre-governmental man was already bound to his fellows by ties of affection and instinctive benevolence. All men were born with a moral sense, an intuitional perceptionism, which enabled them to tell the difference between right and wrong. When men came together in society, they did so in order to guarantee, in Hutcheson's famous formula, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

Thus happiness had a public meaning for the Scottish thinkers, says Wills, a communitarian meaning. He also insists that they thought of equality in a different way than Locke did. In the Lockean system of natural rights, men were equal because they all were entitled to life, liberty, and property. But for the Scots, says Wills, equality was rooted in human nature; in spite of differences in intelligence, strength, cultural advantage, and wealth, all men had an innate moral faculty.

The reverse side of Wills's claim that there are no direct textual parallels between Locke's second *Treatise* and the Declaration is his assertion that parallels to the Declaration can be found everywhere in the writings of the Scottish school. The passages he offers by way of proof merely remind us that Wills has no feeling for the cadences of language. What his textual comparatism finally comes down to is a philosophical dissection of individual words in the Declaration in which Wills discerns a dominant Scottish influence. As in his chapter on "necessary," he wanders far afield in search of support for his interpretations. He also has no qualms about citing references from the older Jefferson in order to demonstrate what the thirty-three-year-old author of the Declaration had in mind.

For example, he backs up his

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contention that Jefferson in 1776 was a moral-sense egalitarian by quoting from the letter Jefferson wrote to his nephew, Peter Carr, in 1787: "The moral sense, or conscience, is . . . given to all human beings. . . . State a moral case to a plowman and a professor. The former will decide it as well and often better than the latter." What Wills neglects to tell us, however, is that when Jefferson wrote to Carr he was in Paris, his nephew in America. The spectacle of the idle, corrupt society of European courtiers disgusted Jefferson, and aroused in him admiring thoughts of hard-working American farmers and of the harmony and dignity of Indian tribal life. The anti-intellectual egalitarianism he voiced in this letter was not a worked out, consistently held philosophy, but a temporary means of identifying himself with the untainted life of simple people. It is a sign of Wills's lack of historical imagination, as well as of his relentless ideological bias, that he does not provide us with this context for the Carr letter.

Furthermore, even if Jefferson had been a consistent believer in moral-sense philosophy, this would not have made him an egalitarian, for Wills has magnified the extent to which the Scottish philosophers believed in the uniformity of human nature. Lord Kames, the one Scottish thinker whom the young Jefferson quoted in his *Commonplace Book* at copious length, explicitly denied that the moral sense was a fully formed and instinctively operating faculty in all men. The moral sense, said Kames, "improves gradually like our other powers and faculties." In the margin of one of Kames's *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion,* Jefferson penned a note expressing his complete agreement with Kames's developmental conception, and even in the letter to Peter Carr he says at one point that moral sense is given to all human beings "in a stronger or weaker degree." All men, in sum, were not created equal, morally speaking. Some men had less well developed moral faculties than others, and while inferior faculties were susceptible of "refinement," as Jefferson noted in his marginal comment in Kames, the process required centuries of historical change. The claim that the author of the Declaration believed in the moral equality of 18th-century men (black as well as white, we are assured) represents Wills's most blatant effort to rewrite the Declaration in his own ideological terms.

"THE pursuit of happiness" is a phrase which has puzzled many interpreters. Their best guess has been that Jefferson, not wishing to repeat the familiar Lockean triad of "life, liberty, and property," gave it a rhetorically different twist but did not alter the meaning. Wills thinks otherwise. "Property" connoted private selfishness to the 18th century; but to many thinkers, the alternative term employed by Jefferson referred to the common weal. Hutcheson, Chastellux, and other quantifying Scotsmen and Frenchmen believed that public happiness was a measurable phenomenon and could be augmented by conscious planning. Increased happiness was within the range of social possibility, and men pursued it.

Jefferson shared the quantifiers' faith, according to Wills. Chastellux in the early 1770's had proclaimed that one of the major indices of happiness in any culture was population density; the higher the density, the happier the people. A decade later, in one of the chapters in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784–85), Jefferson also addressed himself to the problem of population growth. He opposed a large-scale immigration to Virginia because American society had not had much experience of self-rule and could not absorb many immigrants without endangering a precarious social harmony. "Suppose 20 millions of republican Americans thrown all of a sudden into France, what would be the condition of that kingdom? If it would be more turbulent, less happy, less strong, we may believe that the addition of half a million foreigners to our present numbers would produce a similar effect here." The passage would seem to indicate that Jefferson did not agree with Chastellux that large population was a key to public happiness, but Wills says that in fact the passage "implies" agreement. "Notice how, in that quote," says Wills—and the upcoming emphasis is his—"the amount of *happiness* is forecast *on the basis of numbers.*"

Wills leaves out even more evidence than he distorts. As William Peden has pointed out, Jefferson wrote *Notes on Virginia* almost in spite of himself. The book was begun and all but completed during the darkest period of his life, in the final months of his governorship of an invaded Virginia and in the period of retirement that followed. The motivation behind the book was the urgent desire of the French government to acquire information about the American states. The French wanted facts and figures because they were becoming progressively more involved with a political rebellion that was in deep trouble. At about the same time as the battle of Camden, in which demoralized Virginia soldiers were put to rout, François Marbois, the secretary of the French legation at Philadelphia, distributed a semi-official questionnaire about the American states among members of the Continental Congress. Jefferson agreed to answer for Virginia.

He took up the question of Virginia's population because Marbois specifically asked him about it. He argued against the idea of rapidly populating the state with immigrants, on the grounds both of America's inexperience with self-rule and of the amount of unarable land in Virginia. Yet at the same time Jefferson sought to reassure the numbers-conscious French that eventually Virginia would achieve a "competent population" by natural propagation. That word, "competent," is significant. In effect, what Jefferson was saying in his chapter on population was that America was destined to become a viable nation and that the French need have no fears about an American alliance.

Notes on Virginia does not assert that man has an unalienable right to pursue public happiness. Indeed, happiness as a concept is not dealt with in the *Notes* in any form. In the quotation from the book that

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Wills himself cites, the word does not even appear. Jefferson uses three adjectives in sequence, "turbulent," "happy," and "strong." Wills converts the second into a noun, ignores the first and third, and bids us notice how Jefferson forecasts happiness on the basis of numbers—whereas Jefferson is really talking about social stability and how best to achieve it, as our curiously conservative revolutionists were wont to do. It is on shell games like this that Wills builds his reinterpretation of the meaning of "the pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration.

Inventing America is careless about language, displays no feeling for historical circumstance, is badly organized, rebarbatively written, and replete with factual errors. In addition to the mistakes already cited, I was particularly struck by the misdating of the appearance of *Notes on Virginia* by four years and of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* by two years, by the reference to Winthrop Jordan's *White Over Black* as *Black Over White*, and by the neatest-trick-of-the-week statement that "copies of the 1814 edition of Locke's works can be found, at some point before 1776, in 23 per cent of the known colonial libraries."

Yet in spite of its ridiculous mistakes, large and small, *Inventing America* has had a great critical success, for in the world of the 70's the cult of egality and "human rights" is served by many priests, including some who may be unconscious of what they are doing. David Brion Davis, Edmund S. Morgan, and other reviewers have hailed *Inventing America* as a superbly researched and brilliantly illuminating work of history without once mentioning its shameless pandering to the *Zeitgeist* that has affected their own judgment. "Who would think it possible," exclaims Professor Morgan in the *New York Review of Books*, "to redirect historical scholarship by explaining what Thomas Jefferson said in the Declaration of Independence?" After Carl Becker's book, one would have thought it nearly impossible. But where there's a Wills, there's a way.

Zionism, Racism, and Free Speech

Ann Hulbert and Peter Galison

AMID cheering and clenched fists from its far Left members and strong objections from others, the British National Union of Students (NUS) voted on April 6 to reinstate its "no-platform-to-racists" rule. This was the latest move in a four-year-old controversy over the union's adoption of the rule as a tactic in its fight against racism. Originally directed against extreme right-wing groups, the policy was applied last year to some Jewish student societies identified as Zionist and therefore racist. This intensified an already heated debate, both inside and outside the academic community, over such fundamental issues as freedom of speech and racial tolerance. As the latest meeting proved, the NUS still remains sharply divided.

There is no American counterpart to the NUS, which represents all British university and polytechnic students on both specifically academic and broader political issues. At a spring conference in April 1974, an outspokenly leftist NUS executive body called for "an extension and intensification of the fight against racism," and proposed a motion intended to do just that. The motion to amend the union's constitution stated:

> The conference recognizes the need to refuse any assistance (financial or otherwise) to openly racist or fascist organizations or societies (e.g. Monday Club, National Front, Action Party/Union Movement, National Democratic Party) and to deny them a platform. However, the conference believes that in order to counter these groups, it is also necessary to prevent any member of these organizations, or individuals known to espouse similar views, from speaking in colleges by whatever means are necessary (including disruption of the meeting).

The motion was passed by a vote of 204,619 to 182,760, and the so-called "no-platform" debate began.

The ban immediately encountered opposition in the press and the general public as well as in the academic community. NUS president, John Randall, in a widely read article in the (London) *Times Higher Education Supplement*, defended the union's position. He maintained that by imposing the ban the union was neither undermining fundamental principles of the academic community nor overstepping reasonable bounds of political action. On the

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contrary, the aim of the ban, he claimed, was to resurrect "the ideal of the academic institution as an international community." This ideal, he said, "has become sadly tarnished of late" by college administrations' discriminatory attitudes and actions toward Third World students. Moreover, "this official attitude of intolerance . . . fosters the more blatant persecution practiced and advocated by the National Front and its obnoxious allies."

But this defense did not silence those opposed to the ban. A *Times Higher Education Supplement* editorial denounced in uncompromising terms the contempt the ban showed for the "articles of faith . . . that uphold both the university and the conduct of British political life: the supremacy of reason and disciplined imagination for solving intellectual problems and the moral code of liberalism."

College officials deplored the upholding of the ban. At the same time, individual student unions spoke out against the "paternalism" of the NUS executive and expressed their opposition to the ban. Students formed various explicitly nonpartisan groups as part of a "Free Speech in NUS" campaign against the "no-platform" policy.

Under this pressure, the NUS executive modified its stand at a meeting in May 1974, but did not reverse it as many had expected. It proposed amendments to the "no-platform" motion, forbidding the use of violence in suppressing speakers and stating that the NUS could only urge, not force, member student unions to adopt the policy. These steps were welcomed by those who, in the words of a student opposition group, wished "to move the NUS away from the authoritarian approach of the broad Left," yet they also felt the NUS still had a long way to go in becoming a truly democratic organization.

Over the next few years, however, the course of the English student campaign against racism and the application of the "no-platform" took an ironic turn. In the aftermath of the 1975 United Nations resolution declaring Zionism a form of racism, various student unions made efforts, beginning in the spring of 1977, to apply the "no-platform" policy against Zionists and against Jewish student societies that supported Israel. The scene of the battle against racism seemed to have changed considerably since 1974. Now Zionists, not the National Front and right-wing racist organizations, figured as the main opponents. In addition, positions within student ranks shifted. The efforts to apply the "no-platform" policy now were initiated by local member student unions—mostly by Arab, other Third World, and extreme leftist student organizations within those unions—not by the NUS executive on the national level as in 1974.

During the spring terms of 1977, amid general confusion on the local level, anti-Zionist motions proliferated and efforts to apply the "no-platform" policy to Jewish student societies increased. Resolutions on the Middle East question were debated in twenty-one student unions; eleven of those passed anti-Zionist motions which, among other things, equated Zionism with racism. Where such motions were passed, the application of the "no-platform" policy then became the issue—an issue which was far from clear-cut, as events on two campuses, Salford and York, attest.

In mid-April of last year, the thirty-five members of the Salford Jewish society applied to the student union for permission to hold an Israel week and sponsor various speakers and activities. Salford student-union officials specified that activities should be cultural, not political, and then refused to insure that such activities would not be disrupted. Asked whether a rabbi would be permitted to speak on the relationship between Zionism and Judaism, the student-union president, John Owen, was quoted as saying: "It would be all right to speak about the differences between the two but not about the links." Finally, the Salford student-union executive decided that the union facilities could not be made available to the rabbi. In response to these controversial actions, Salford university officials issued strong condemnations of the student union's position, while a small meeting of students reaffirmed their anti-Zionist stand with another vote.

At York, the confrontation was somewhat different, although not any more straightforward. There, the Jewish society declared itself a Zionist body and the student union passed a motion equating Zionism with racism. Yet the union did not want to take the next step and invoke the "no-platform" policy against the Jewish society, and so it simply voted to declare the society non-Zionist. When the Jewish society changed its constitution to become an "explicitly Zionist body," however, the union decided to apply the ban and eliminate the society from its register. At this point, university officials intervened to demand a reversal of the ban. In mid-June, the union did reverse it and passed a resolution which denied the equation of Zionism and racism.

As POSITIONS on the "no-platform" issue shifted on the local level during the spring, the NUS executive took a different stand from that of 1974 and began to voice concern over the policy and its new application. In April, outgoing NUS president, Charles Clarke, argued that the union's democratic principles were undermined by the restrictions placed on members considered racist or Zionist. He emphasized that "the first responsibility of the NUS is to defend the rights of all its members to participate fully in all the activities of their students' union" and "to argue for the policy decisions in which they believe." He expressed confidence that the situation could be kept under control, citing general support from many student unions for NUS statements against the restrictions on Jewish societies.

The fall term opened with the announcement of a definitive position by students at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London University (SOAS). They passed a motion asserting that "racism is not peripheral to Zionism but central and fundamental to it." On that basis they voted to "refuse money and facilities to

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societies whose aim it is to propagate Zionism and organize support for the state of Israel."

Elsewhere positions were as varied as they had been in the spring. At some institutions no bill was passed; at others the Jewish societies were deprived of funds and/or facilities; at still others a pro-Palestinian stand was endorsed without any sanctions against Jewish or Zionist groups.

Where stands had been taken in the spring, shifts now began to occur as anti-Zionist motions were repealed on some campuses. At Salford, the ban on pro-Zionist speakers was lifted while a general resolution was passed supporting the Palestinian cause and maintaining the equation of Zionism and racism. By the end of November, only a few institutions maintained their restrictions on Jewish student societies.

The NUS leadership by this time had become determined to reverse the "no-platform" policy. In response to the SOAS motion, the NUS executive objected strongly to individual bannings. Sue Slipman, president of the NUS, stated: "I want to make it absolutely clear that what happened at Salford and York was corrupt and undemocratic and we will fight it all down the line." In preparation for national NUS meeting at Blackpool, scheduled for December 1977, the NUS executive discussed the possibility of presenting a motion to suspend any member unions which "in the view of the executive committee or of the conference discriminate against any of their members on grounds of race, color, or creed." In addition, they hoped to strike out the "no-platform" clause altogether. A pre-conference amendment which they prepared claimed that the "no-platform" bill had hurt the union and been destructive of its campaign against racism.

As the Blackpool meeting drew near, the debate on the "no-platform" policy and its application to Jewish societies became more and more heated. At one extreme, some people compared the bannings with Nazism. For instance, Eric Moonman, Labor MP for Basildon, said in relation to events at Salford, York, and SOAS: "Part of the racial campaign in Nazi Germany against the Jews in the early 1930's took place at a source of learning —the colleges and universities. It seems odd that we have so easily forgotten that." At the other extreme, defenders of the "no-platform" policy asserted that it was necessary to reaffirm the policy to avoid racial attacks. "Not to do so implies they [the racists] have a legitimate point of view and racialist speakers invariably encourage racial violence."

AT THE Blackpool meeting, Conservative, Labor, Liberal, and Communist students allied against the ultra-Left to attack the "no-platform" bill. They succeeded in defeating the old policy by a vote of 273,087 to 246,510. A last-ditch attempt by the ultra-leftists to revive the "no-platform" clause was defeated by an even larger margin. A vote on sanctions against institutions that restricted the activities of member groups (like the Jewish societies) was deferred until April.

In place of the "no-platform-to-racists" rule, the NUS now argued:

> That the major battle is to win people away from racialist ideas and activities. That the "no-platform" position was never a strategy for defeating racialism. That NUS should encourage student unions not to invite speakers propagating racialist views but that it must be up to each new generation of students to take these decisions at a local level. Conference, therefore, rejects the "no-platform" slogan because we believe this is an obstruction at the national level, and ineffective in fighting the spread of racial prejudice.

At this point a constructive resolution to the debate seemed to have been reached.

The debate, however, was not to end here. Instead it took an unexpected turn at the NUS April 6 conference where the union voted by a small majority to reinstate the "no-platform" policy. Since the December meeting, a bitter controversy over immigration policies had intensified in Britain. This departure from the union's earlier, more moderate stand can be seen as one more instance of a general trend toward increasing polarization on racial issues in the country as a whole.

In this atmosphere, it was no surprise that the discussion of the "no-platform" policy at the April conference became particularly charged. The NUS executive, along with Conservative, Communist, and Liberal students, was determined to keep the "no-platform" rule off the books, and the ultra-leftists just as determined to see it reinstated. Trevor Phillips, the first black president of the NUS, argued vehemently against such tactics as the "no-platform" policy.

When the vote was finally called, the "no-platform" policy was reimposed. In a surprise move, the Labor students abandoned the Conservative-Liberal-Communist-NUS executive alliance and joined the Trotskyist extremists to defeat their opponents by a vote of 272,450 to 233,790. Phillips, angered by Labor's move, said: "If anyone offered me a Labor party card after this, I'd tear it up."

While those Labor defectors and ultra-leftists exulted in their triumph, the defeated opposition voiced apprehension. The president of the Federation of Conservative Students said: "This policy will enable a general meeting of students to deny a platform to anyone they consider to be a racist" —and expressed the fear that Conservative leaders, including opposition leader Margaret Thatcher, would be banned on that ground. Trevor Phillips expressed the more general and by now familiar objection that the policy was an intolerant, undemocratic tactic, an obstructive one in the student campaign against racism. Nonetheless, he said, the NUS executive would enact the conference's decisions, but emphasized that the "no-platform" policy was only one tactic in the NUS struggle against racism.

The executive was, however, able to ratify the constitutional amendment proposed in December authorizing the conference to impose sanctions on any constituent union that discriminated against any of its members. This would clearly prevent such flagrant abuses as severe restrictions on student groups like the Jewish socie-

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ties. But the amendment still leaves room for other questionable uses of the "no-platform" policy. The invocation of the ban by the London School of Economics student union against Sir Keith Joseph, the Conservative spokesman on industry, when he refused to sign a statement opposing all forms of immigration control—a refusal deemed racist by the union—seemed just such a misuse. The LSE move provoked widespread protest, and led to further attempts to reverse or modify the "no-platform" policy, but to no avail.

AT THIS point, then, the full implications of the "no-platform" policy remain unclear. The attempt to apply the ban in 1977 to Jewish student societies seemed in December to have convinced the NUS as a body of the policy's dangerous potential for promoting an unacceptable degree of intolerance. Yet apparently that lesson was not a long-lived or complete one; the "no-platform" policy has been reinstated, and only a limited amendment has been adopted. With attention once again directed primarily at Tory and ultra-right-wing groups this year, the NUS seems to feel, as it did in 1974, that the dangers do not outweigh the efficacy of the "no-platform" tactic in the fight against racism. Yet the NUS is clearly far from unified on its latest stance, and the only thing that is certain is that there will be further controversy.

Fiction

Writing About Vietnam

Pearl K. Bell

EVERY war finds its way into literature. From Homer to Pynchon, the exhilaration and horror of military combat have provided writers—whether they themselves have actually fought or not—with unique forms of literary realism and fantasy. Even when an author's attitude toward a particular conflict has been outraged or cynical rather than celebratory, war itself has always afforded an unsurpassably dramatic subject. But the most recent war in American history, the one war we could not win and which ended in ignominious defeat, was in countless hidden and obvious ways drastically different from every other war in our history and the weight of Vietnam's many sorry distinctions has exerted some curious effects on the literary attempts, in both memoirs and novels, to capture its singular quality.

PEARL K. BELL *reviews fiction regularly in these pages.*

What was it that made this war so disturbingly unlike other American wars? For one thing, it was the first war in history whose progress—or deadly lack of progress—was fed day after day, year after year, into the maw of television, almost immediately after it happened. The killing and the bombing were part of everyone's daily drama and daily tedium; the whole world *was* watching, all the time. On film the blood and the mortar-rockets, the grimy faces of the grunts and their officers, often seemed not altogether real, as though we were seeing a remarkably lifelike movie whose production costs had run into the billions, while we knew all too well that the pictures streaming from that Cyclopean eye were not just pictures, and the grenades and bullets and wounds were not spaghetti-Western props or special effects.

Nor was TV alone in making Vietnam the most exhaustively documented war ever fought, while it paradoxically remained one of the least comprehensible. From every country, and every American-boondock paper, from all the big metropolitan dailies, from the news magazines and monthlies, from the television networks, the photographers and correspondents crawled all over South Vietnam like free-spending ants, flooding an already word-weary, picture-weary public with far more news, opinions, and images than anyone could begin to absorb. Everyone got into the Vietnam act, not just the accredited journalists; at times it seemed as though no truly *engagé* novelist or critic could hold up his head in Manhattan if he (and, yes, she) had not spent at least one nauseated week in Saigon and one enraptured week in Hanoi, whence quickly blossomed a small but pithy volume of firsthand impressions. The octopus of contemporary journalism wrapped so many predatory tentacles around the Vietnam war that, as Michael

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Herr writes in *Dispatches*,* "the most profound event of the American decade" was turned into "a communications pudding, taking its most obvious, undeniable history and making it into a secret history." To those journalists and would-be novelists who actually fought in the battles or had legitimate assignments that kept them under fire along with the troops, all those "neutral observers" flying busily in and out of Saigon and poking around in the rice paddies for a quick dose of local color were infuriating amateurs who hadn't a clue to what the fighting was actually like.

But neither television nor journalism was responsible in the end for the sense of unreality which hung over the Vietnam conflict, and to which they both contributed so much. Geographical and political unreality infected everything about the war, from the way it was conducted in Washington, half a world distant from the battlefield, to the way it was experienced by American soldiers, sent as they were to an insufferably hostile climate to fight an enemy they knew nothing about and whose ideological convictions aroused in them no great opposing passion.

It is no wonder, then, that the experience of Vietnam has been so hard to capture in literature—including the literature written by those soldiers and correspondents who hoped, once they had left the mess behind them, to recollect in tranquility, with all the right persuasions of image and eloquence, the war *they* had been through. Nor is it any wonder that in the books that have eventually been written and published, the thin line between fiction and memoir (which is inevitably blurred in war narratives) seems to vanish altogether, particularly in the battle scenes, which are set down with an obsessive minuteness of detail—about the M-16's and all the other "anti-personnel devices," the sweat, the bleeding heads, the corpses, the screaming obscenities—as though only by engorging the reader could the writer hope to convey the truth of each futile operation. What is patently "unreal" in memoirs like Philip Caputo's *A Rumor of War*† and Herr's *Dispatches*, or in novels like Tim O'Brien's *Going After Cacciato*,** seems not so much to have been invented by the literary imagination as hallucinated by men scared, tired, and, like as not, stoned.

IF ANY proof were needed that the conventions and devices of naturalistic fiction will surely defeat any novelist trying to fit the savagery and humiliation of Vietnam into a shopworn frame, Winston Groom's *Better Times Than These*†† provides more than enough. Yet old-fashioned best-selling formulas die hard, and there will always be an ambitious novelist somewhere who, after harrowing years of spooky jungle combat in Vietnam, will obstinately go ahead and write a "surefire" kind of war story no matter how severely the television news robs him of his territorial Purple Heart mysteries. Groom, a young veteran, has drawn his first novel from a two-year tour of duty in Vietnam as an army lieutenant, and it is significant that he has dedicated the book to his late friend and neighbor James Jones, and been grandly praised on the dust jacket by that old pro, Irwin Shaw. In fact, Groom attempts to do for the Vietnam war what Irwin Shaw did for World War II in *The Young Lions*.

In the time-honored design of such novels, Groom assembles the usual affirmative-action sampler from the American melting pot—a Jew, a Wasp, a redneck, an Italian, and so on—and tucks the past history of each of his representative men into the loose folds of their war experience. On the ship that is taking Bravo Company, Seventh Cavalry, to Vietnam—the same regiment that Custer led to disaster at Little Big Horn—we meet Billy Kahn, a Southern Jew who joined up to show the hometown anti-Semites "he wasn't some draft-dodging, pawnshop-running Jew"; Francis Holden III, a Park Avenue Wasp, ramrod-proud to serve his country and furious about his girlfriend's anti-war activities; the blustering commander, Colonel Patch, proud of carrying on Custer's gallant tradition, who seems to think the Vietcong are just another Indian tribe and has forgotten what happened at Little Big Horn; and many more. Despite Groom's conscientious backing and filling, none of his characters is more than the sum of his tidy biographical parts until he is engulfed by the stress of combat, when, gripped by terror and hatred and a violent longing to survive, he briefly comes to life in the fire of death. Though Groom's battle episodes seem flawlessly authentic, he is far less confident about the way his sample Americans think and feel when they are not withstanding the assault of an invisible enemy.

But the more serious failing of *Better Times Than These* stems from Groom's indecipherable point of view about the American presence in Vietnam. True, at times he seems to think along the lines of those gassy proclamations of victory that flowed from General Westmoreland's headquarters. But he writes so clumsily about members of the peace movement that one cannot figure out whether he despises or admires them. When Bravo Company is preparing to "waste" a village suspected of hiding VC guerrillas, Groom cannot stifle his pomposity: "Now, at any moment, each of them would become an individual, final extension of a great policy-making scheme that involved the entire political, social, and economic fabric of the most powerful nation in the history of the world."

If Groom is not being ironic, how do these flag-waving abstractions accord with his bitter account of the appalling casualties suffered by the company when it is ordered to defend a position that is in every sense indefensible? Despite the reams of tendentious reportage by radical journalists, such as Jonathan Schell, seemingly unruffled by any moral perplexity, the Vietnam war yielded little in the way of unequivocal certainty about good and evil, right and wrong. And even a pedestrian novel like *Better Times Than*

* Knopf, 260 pp., $8.95.

† Reviewed in COMMENTARY by William J. Bennett, October 1977.

** Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, 338 pp., $8.95.

†† Summit, 411 pp., $10.95.

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These, which on the face of it seems perfectly straightforward, cautiously avoiding any risky originality, a plodding exercise in commercial fiction, gets mired in the confusion and evasive dubiety that has thwarted more sophisticated and audacious writers than Winston Groom.

TIM O'BRIEN is an inventive and thoughtful novelist who in *Going After Cacciato* makes extraordinarily resourceful use of two worlds rarely experienced by the same man. He has been a graduate student in government at Harvard and a foot soldier in Vietnam, and among all the literary writers about Vietnam he seems to be the only one with any interest in the political background of the war. O'Brien rejects the overfamiliar novelistic devices that Groom has not outgrown, knowing that an ordinary narrative about a war that flouted every lesson of military history is doomed to get it all wrong. Instead of slogging inch by inch through the same muddy jungle that television transformed into an instant cliché, O'Brien stands the war on its head and turns it into a picaresque fantasy. Young Cacciato, "dumb as a bullet," decides, like Melville's Bartleby, that he would prefer not to follow the rules and, in his case, hang around waiting to get killed. By now most of his squad has been dragged away in body bags, so he packs up his courage in his old kit bag and starts walking; his destination, incredibly, is Paris.

What is now left of the squad, seven soldiers as weary of death and guns as the miraculously nomadic Cacciato, leap at the chance to follow this *ignis fatuus*—ostensibly to bring him back to his senses and his duty; but though they bitch incessantly about the trouble "dumb Cacciato" loads them with, they are of course delighted to get clear of a war they cannot understand, from an enemy they cannot see, cannot talk to, know nothing about, and have no good reason to be killing, except for the awkward fact that this enemy is trying to kill *them*. The one articulate man of honor and reason in the squad, Paul Berlin, ruminates on the treacherous sea of unknowing that surrounded American soldiers in a culture they found more impenetrable than the vegetation:

> Not knowing the language, they did not know the people. They did not know what the people loved or respected or feared or hated. . . . He wanted them to understand, all of them, that he felt no hate. It was all a sad accident, he would have told them —chance, high-level politics, confusion. . . . He was no tyrant, no pig, no Yankee killer. He was innocent. . . . He would have told them that, the villagers, if he'd known the language. . . . He did not know who was right, or what was right; he didn't know if it was a war of self-determination or self-destruction, outright aggression or national liberation. . . . He saw sense in both sides of the debate, but he did not know where truth lay; he didn't know if Communist tyranny would prove worse in the long run than the tyrannies of Ky or Thieu or Khanh—he simply didn't know. . . . He just didn't know if the war was right or wrong. And who did?

Though Tim O'Brien is by no means an intellectual or political innocent to this degree, he understands the baffled floundering of the American soldier in Vietnam, and is far more sensitive to and honest about the conundrums of an unfathomable war than Winston Groom. Young Berlin's long internal monologues, in which he painfully tries to make some sense of all the maddening enigmas, and gropes for some morsel of moral certainty and firmness that remains perpetually out of reach, are among the most moving passages in *Going After Cacciato*.

But O'Brien is reaching for bigger literary game than reflection alone can capture. The picaresque walk half around the world is of course only an imaginary withdrawal from the stench of death, and in case we are tempted to take the squad's adventurous march literally, O'Brien frequently reminds us about "flights of the imagination," and the battle-weary soldier's inability to "separate what is happening from what only might have happened. . . . He wasn't dreaming, or imagining, just pretending. Pretending was his best trick to forget the war." As the squad resolutely follows Cacciato's trail across the mountains and rain forests and rivers in an Asia and Europe of the mind, they are by turns tourists, pirates, prisoners, swashbuckling and ingenious adventurers, a jolly Jules Verne ensemble making a peace movie more exciting than any war movie Hollywood could turn out.

O'Brien can be wickedly funny about the kind of anti-war radicals who are only wooden slogan-mongers in *Better Times Than These*. On the road in Yugoslavia, Cacciato's pursuers hitch a ride with an American girl who embraces these apparent deserters as fellow-revolutionaries. "I'm a dropout myself," she announces:

> "Two years at San Diego, all the bullshit in the world. Couldn't hack it. So, bang, I quit. Sometimes you've just got to separate yourself from evil."
>
> Oscar [one of the soldiers] stared at her. "You say it's same-same? Nam and fucking San Diego State?"
>
> "Not exactly, maybe. But I can empathize. . . . When you see evil you have to get away from it, right?"
>
> "Evil?" Oscar tapped Doc's shoulder. "You ever see evil in Nam?"

They throw her out of her van and drive off, convulsed by her spray-paint rhetoric.

The soldiers do finally get to Paris and find the evanescent Cacciato, only to lose him again almost immediately ("missing in action"), and then walk all the way back to Vietnam, which they never left. Cacciato's Paris, like the Moscow of Chekhov's three sisters, is only a consoling legend of longing that none of them really hopes to see. It is a poignant fantasy, though the adventures of pretending rarely become as interesting as Paul Berlin's quietly remorseless meditations. But *Going After Cacciato* is a remarkable piece of work, even though the alternating faces of its story—the one a cinematic daydream, the other a waking nightmare—do not fuse in a dramatically realized whole. In the end, this matters a good deal less than

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O'Brien's profound understanding of the moral innocence that bewildered, then corrupted, and finally destroyed so many of the American soldiers in Vietnam.

ONE enormously important aspect of the Vietnam war—or rather, of the American cultural era obsessed with and lacerated by that war—has been almost entirely ignored by the novelists and journalists. Robert Stone, in *Dog Soldiers*, published in 1974, chose the heroin traffic between Vietnam and the U.S. as an ominous symbol of the creeping moral attrition licensed by a war of attrition, and though only a small part of the story takes place in Asia, Vietnam is a dark retributive presence throughout that novel (now a movie titled *Who'll Stop the Rain*). But only Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, a collection of reports from the war originally published in such hip journals as *Esquire* and *Rolling Stone*, has incorporated the rock music, the drugs, and the narcissism of the counterculture right into the veins of its language.

Herr's prose is drenched in the drug-rock argot of the age. The pages of *Dispatches* pulse with the loud beat of Mick Jagger, the Mothers of Invention, Jimi Hendrix, whose voice comes shooting out of an infantryman's cassette recorder as Herr grows numb with fright in a rice paddy, and Herr's own voice is sometimes all but drowned out in his pages by the dismal lyrics that pass for poetry in the rock-group subculture (the mandatory acknowledgments of permission to reprint some of this doggerel take up more than two pages of the book).

Reading Herr is like seeing a rock movie with such a deafening sound track that you can't hear what the actors are saying—and maybe you aren't supposed to want to hear it. But Herr does indeed want to be heard—his war coverage is technically an idiosyncratic sort of journalism, but *Dispatches* is the most self-consciously and ornately literary book about Vietnam I have yet read—and when he is using his own frenzied voice, and not just being Son of Mailer, he makes you feel the "freakyfluky" atmosphere of terror with shuddering intensity. The very day he first arrived in Vietnam, in 1967, the minute he was off the plane "was like a walk through a colony of stroke victims, a thousand men on a cold rainy airfield after too much of something I'd never really know, 'a way you'll never be,' dirt and blood and torn fatigues, eyes that poured out a steady charge of wasted horror." Typically, the words are overblown, the images drunk and reeling with self-importance, yet Herr writes with an eerie power that is probably not far off the mark, some of the time.

For a year and a half Herr, then still in his twenties, moved through the Vietnam landscape collecting material like scars during the battle of Hué; the siege at Khe Sanh; in helicopters the Vietcong were stippling with bullets; on Marine probes in the Delta and the Highlands; and in Saigon. Living with the soldiers through all those hazardous months, sharing their mortal fears, their dope, their ardent obscenities, their lousy jokes, Herr felt himself drawn into the entrails of the war, and could not find it in himself to hate even those Americans whose faces became transfigured with vicious ecstasy when they cackled about "killing gooks."

The individual soldiers, even those "mean dumb" ones, inform the most credible moments in *Dispatches*, when Herr is taking it all in—not just listening to the rock beat in his own fear-ridden head. But at times the spaced-out style trips him up, as though all that ferocious, zany self-awareness had lost connection with the war, and the frantic rock pounds out of control like a very loud electric guitar playing by itself to a spectral audience. Sometimes he becomes so maudlin that he seems to wallow in a charade of horror. At the end, writing about the way he began to unravel when he came home from Vietnam, Herr blindly gropes for some links between Vietnam and rock and the worst of the 60's—a desperate need to understand, at the end of a book that took almost a decade to finish, not just the nightmare memories of the war that haunted him long after he'd gone, but what the war had done to American life.

For all the canniness and literary daring of *Dispatches*, Herr strangely fails to make some important connections, and principally in the fact that the rock world he was so attuned to in Vietnam howled its smug anti-war complacencies from the mink-lined coziness of a billion-dollar industry, and did not in fact give a conscience-stricken damn about the news he was sending home from Vietnam. The obscenity of a punk like Mick Jagger, screaming his "revolutionary" songs like "Street Fighting Man" while the gold rained down, whipping up the hysterical rock orgies that culminated in Altamont—this squalid obbligato to the hey-hey music Michael Herr seems not to hear, much less confront.

UNLIKE Herr, Tim O'Brien in *Going After Cacciato* does not need the din of rock to help him figure out, with painfully stubborn persistence, just what made the Vietnam war so different from other wars, to ask why the American soldiers felt confounded and baffled in ways that never arose during World War II:

> They did not know even the simple things: a sense of victory, or satisfaction, or necessary sacrifice. . . . No Patton rushing for the Rhine, no beachheads to storm and win and hold for the duration. They did not have targets. They did not have a cause. They did not know if it was a war of ideology or economics or hegemony or spite. . . . They did not know the terms of the war, its architecture, the rules of fair play. When they took prisoners, which was rare, they did not know the questions to ask, whether to release a suspect or beat on him. They did not know how to feel. Whether, when seeing a dead Vietnamese, to be happy or sad or relieved. . . . They did not know how to feel when they saw villages burning. Revenge? Loss? Peace of mind or anguish? They did not know.

In this passage O'Brien sheds more light on the state of mind induced by the incomprehensible peculiarities of Vietnam than anything else I have so far read about that wasted and unavailing conflict.

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Sickness & Psyche

ILLNESS AS METAPHOR. By SUSAN SONTAG. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 88 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by DAN JACOBSON

ARE we responsible for the illnesses from which we suffer? Do the most serious of our illnesses reveal moral and psychological truths about ourselves which we would rather keep hidden? Do they, in fact, reveal those truths precisely because we have attempted to hide them? In her new book, Susan Sontag utters a heartfelt No in answer to these questions, especially insofar as they are asked about what she calls the "master illnesses" of the last two centuries, tuberculosis and cancer:

> With the modern diseases (once TB, now cancer), the romantic idea that the disease expresses the character is invariably extended to assert that the character causes the disease—because it has not expressed itself. Passion moves inward, striking and blighting the deepest cellular recesses. . . . Such preposterous and dangerous views manage to put the onus of the disease on the patient and not only weaken the patient's ability to understand the range of plausible medical treatment but also, implicitly, direct the patient away from treatment. Cure is thought to depend principally on the patient's already sorely tested or enfeebled capacity for self-love.

This seems to me one of the clearest, strongest, and (notwithstanding the reservations I shall have to make about it) most sympathetic utterances in the book. However, the reader will have noticed that by using a term like "modern diseases," and by asserting that one disease can in some sense "replace" another, the author is clearly indicating that it is not illness as such, or its treatment as such, which is her subject, but rather the cultural or moral status of the illnesses she discusses: what we have made of them, or the uses to which we have put them, rather than what they actually are. Hence the book's title. We are presented with a series of arguments designed to show why tuberculosis and cancer occupy or have occupied a special place in the minds of people living in the 19th and 20th centuries; how that status has been established; and what it reveals about the culture and society at large. In fact, one of the many (apparently unnoticed) oddities of this book is that while the author strenuously contests the idea that such diseases reveal anything other than themselves in a patient, she has no hesitation in making far-reaching diagnoses about the moral and psychological condition of society as a whole on the basis of her partial readings of the most dubious or ambiguous symptoms.

But let me try to summarize her case. Why are TB and cancer the "modern diseases," and what are the metaphoric processes that have been attached to them? Well, TB was the Romantic disease *par excellence*. In the eyes of the Romantic poets and their Victorian and 20th-century successors, "the TB death . . . dissolved the gross body, etherealized the personality, expanded consciousness." The tuberculotic was seen as someone "consumed" by ardor, by an "inward burning" of emotion which ultimately ennobled and spiritualized him even as it killed him:

> It is with TB that the idea of individual illness was articulated, along with the idea that people are made more conscious as they confront their deaths, and in the images that collected around the disease one can see emerging a modern idea of individuality that has taken in the 20th century a more aggressive, if no less narcissistic, form.

As for cancer, the metaphors applied to it speak of it as an invader, an alien presence, a takeover of the body by energies running amok; and the language used about it, or its use as a symbol in other forms of discourse, has a concomitant harshness and hostility. What makes the disease a parallel or even a reciprocal case to TB, however, is that it too is seen as a consequence of disordered emotion. In the writings of people like Wilhelm Reich, Georg Groddeck, Norman Mailer, and a handful of medical investigators whose papers are quoted by Miss Sontag, the cancer patient is reputed to be a self-repressed, depressive type who is ultimately responsible for the disease from which he suffers.

Even from this summary it is clear that the evidence offered by the author for the ideas we are supposed to hold or to have held about the two diseases is of a different kind in each case. A novel or a poem is not the same thing as an utterance by Groddeck or Reich or a research paper in a journal, and its meaning can hardly be taken in the same way. This is an important point, to which I shall return. However, since so much of what I am going to say is critical of the book and its theses, I should make it plain that the *idea* of individual diseases having their "fates" or "cultural meanings" seems to me one well worth pursuing; and that despite my misgivings about Miss Sontag's manner of treating many of the topics she touches upon, there are a number of suggestive and stimulating passages in the book. Her attempt to establish the nature of the special affinity between certain modes of Romanticism and certain ways of perceiving illness—and of perceiving TB in particular—is especially interesting. So too is the observation that in some advanced circles, madness has now replaced TB as the disease which bespeaks the posssession by the sufferer of a sensibility more refined than that of the healthful, slothful mass. Another is the remark that to use the image of cancer to describe a

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manifestation or a group one hates (Jews, Communists, capitalists, "the white race"—the last having once been Miss Sontag's own contribution to this elevated mode of discourse) is not only brutal and threatening as far as one's intended targets are concerned, but is also viciously unkind to those who actually suffer from the disease.

BUT the price the reader has to pay for such illuminations is a high one (and I'm not referring only to the $5.95 asked for the 80-odd small pages of which the book is composed). Intellectual boldness should not be confused with intellectual self-indulgence: Miss Sontag seems to have some trouble in telling them apart. This applies as much to her way of dealing with particular items of evidence as to her large, larger, and largest cultural formulations. Obviously I can give only a very few examples of what I mean. They range from her repeated invocation of the death of little Paul Dombey (in Dickens's *Dombey and Son*) as the very type of that of the tubercular victim, to the remark quoted above that "with TB," there was newly "articulated . . . the idea that people are made more conscious as they approach their deaths." So much, on the latter point, for Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy; so much for Jacob in Genesis; so much for the mixture of moral uplift and ruthless political instruction with which David takes leave of Solomon.

As for Paul Dombey, the fact is that Dickens himself, for good artistic reasons, refrains from ascribing any single cause to Paul's condition. Indeed, the argument that Paul Dombey must have been consumptive, given Dickens's description of his mental and physical state, seems to me merely circular. All Dickens commits himself to (the Apothecary's diagnosis) is that Paul suffers from "a want of vital power . . . and great constitutional weakness."

In this connection, a passage from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Shirley*—not a text cited by Miss Sontag—is of considerable interest:

> She [the heroine] was now precisely in the state when, if her constitution had contained the seeds of consumption, decline, or slow fever, those diseases would have been rapidly developed, and would have soon carried her from the world. People never die of love or grief alone; though some die of inherent maladies, which the tortures of those passions prematurely force into destructive action.

As a member of the unfortunate Brontë family, and as a clergyman's daughter who did her share of visiting the sick, Charlotte Brontë probably knew as much about these subjects as any Victorian novelist; yet notice how the attempt at etiological precision here consorts with a striking diagnostic vagueness. I should add that later in *Shirley* the heroine *does* fall gravely ill—with cholera—and the language used about her then is very similar indeed to that which Miss Sontag believes to be peculiar to descriptions of the victims of TB. "She wasted like any snow-wreath in thaw; she faded like any flower in drought . . . ."

ANOTHER example. We are told on the strength of a single quotation from a play by Goldsmith that

> with the new mobility (social and geographic) made possible in the 18th century, worth and station are not given; they must be asserted. They were asserted through new notions about clothes ("fashion") and new attitudes toward illness. Both . . . became tropes for new attitudes toward the self.

Now if one were to point out that the comedies of Shakespeare and Jonson are aswarm with overdressed upstarts seeking to impress through their newfangled clothes and styles of speech, and that this would seem to make nonsense of the author's confident account of what was distinctive about the 18th century—then what would one be? A pedant? A kill-joy? A spoilsport? Or would one be simple-mindedly pretending that historical processes and changes in the organization of society do not affect the way in which people view themselves?

I can answer the last question, at least. Nothing of the kind. All one would be doing is insisting that literary conventions are enduring and protean, and that they have a life and a logic of their own. It is one thing to demonstrate, with some degree of success, that 19th-century literature took the ugly facts of fatal illness—not just TB—and tried to transform them into symbols of uplifting or reassuring kinds. It is quite another to ask us to believe that these metaphors and symbols were then taken literally by readers (or indeed by the writers themselves). We give our assent to literary works—longing assent, pleasurable assent, horrified assent—precisely because we know it to be provisional; and it is in that very provisionality that the greater part of their value to us is to be found. It follows that questions of what we believe when we read (or write) poems or novels, and of the kind of "truth" they have for us, are of much delicacy and complexity. We certainly cannot read off from them, as if from a series of dials, measurements which we can then confidently apply to the society as a whole, and thus find out what people in that society believed, or even wanted to believe, about themselves. Nor can we do the job in reverse, as it were, and say that here is a society with such-and-such measurements; these are bound to be repeated *in petto* in its works of literature.

To be fair, Miss Sontag is assailed by doubts on this very score at one stage. But she rapidly disposes of them:

> One might reasonably suppose that this romanticization of TB was merely a literary transfiguration of the disease, and that in an era of its great depredations TB was probably thought to be disgusting—as cancer is now. . . . Yet all the evidence indicates that the cult of TB was not simply an invention of Romantic poets and opera librettists but a widespread attitude, and that the person dying (young) of TB really was perceived as a Romantic personality. One must suppose that the reality of this terrible disease was no match for important new ideas, particularly about individuality.

I am afraid the phrase "all the evidence" is a mere flourish; no such evidence is brought forward. Virtually every item of information we are offered about "the cult of TB" is literary: if it doesn't come from

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novels and poems, it comes from the letters of novelists and poets, who are decidedly a special case. There is practically nothing from the letters, memoirs, and biographies of people who are not connected with the arts; nothing from the reports of Health Commissioners and other interested parties. So how can we possibly judge how widespread was "the cult of TB"? Are we to believe—to revert to my own earlier example—that Charlotte Brontë, who used the conventional language of snow-wreaths and flowers about her heroine's malady, did not know perfectly well (when she wasn't "being a novelist") that a major symptom of cholera is uncontrolled diarrhea? Has the death in pain and confusion of myriads of men since the beginning of history ever prevented writers from giving their dying characters prophetic powers? Does my lack of sympathy (which I have in common with Miss Sontag) for the notion that the mad are wiser than the sane prevent me from accepting that Lear as madman and outcast imparts truths that Lear as king is incapable of recognizing?

But perhaps these questions are supererogatory. Perhaps all one need do is point out something the author glimpses early in the book but appears to have forgotten by the time she comes to generalizing about "widespread attitudes" and "reality [being] no match for important new ideas." Surely it is *because* the terrible, omnipresent reality of the disease was only too well recognized, only too familiar, that there took place the literary and operatic romanticization of which she complains.

My own view is that, so far as a positive "cult" of illness can be said to have developed in the early years of the 19th century, it spoke chiefly of the Romantic poets' sense of personal isolation and vulnerability—as, in a different way, did their imaginative identification with criminals, beggars, idiots, and children. Why writers began to feel, or at any rate to publicize, so deep a sense of estrangement from the sources of power in their society, and why readers found it so acceptable that they should do so, are hardly unexplored topics; at this

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point, words like industrialization, urbanization, the middle class, democracy, etc., begin to write themselves on the page. (Though I remain skeptical of their real power to explain changes in literary fashions and attitudes.) Rather than follow such trails, it seems more useful simply to remark that one of the great achievements of the English Victorian novelists was to marry certain Romantic strains to popular evangelical religion—a movement which Miss Sontag does not allude to, though its influence on Victorian fiction in general, and Victorian death-bed scenes in particular, was incalculable.

TURNING from history to the present period, and from tuberculosis to the second of the two great scourges that figure in *Illness as Metaphor*, we note, as I have said, that most of the passages quoted on the psychological origins of cancer are taken from psychologists and medical men, while the metaphors of violence and vileness come from newspapers and the literature of anti-cancer campaigns. By comparison with the section on tuberculosis, relatively little mention is made of imaginative works and little support is sought from them. We note also that there seems to be no logical or emotional "fit" between the two parts of the author's thesis about the symbolic or moral status of cancer within our culture: between, on the one hand, the view of the disease as one of repressed feelings and, on the other, the violently punitive or warlike manner in which she claims it is always written about. That there was such a fit between the excessive "ardor" of the TB victim and the supposedly spiritualizing effects which poets and novelists ascribed to the disease was an important part of her earlier case; here, however, the two sides of the argument seem to be welded together by little more than fierce observations about "our shallow attitude toward death" and some elaborate metaphors of the author's own devising on the supposed characteristics of an advanced capitalist economy.

As far as the psychological diagnoses of cancer are concerned, one problem for me is that the author is writing directly as an American about conditions in America: a subject on which she clearly knows more than I do. If she says the belief that cancer is a "disease of the emotions" is widespread, indeed pervasive, in her country, then I must assume there is some foundation for her assertion. True, the tiny handful of papers she quotes from are unimpressive, to put it politely; but presumably there are people who will believe anything that appears under supposedly scientific auspices. However, the fact that she also has to call repeatedly on the writings of two notorious loonies like Wilhelm Reich and Georg Groddeck might well be thought to weaken her case somewhat—how far, I wonder, has their influence actually spread in the United States, even at third and fourth hand, and how many people, outside small conventicles of their followers, owe serious allegiance to their views of the world and the human body? For myself, speaking from the other side of the Atlantic, I can say that though I have known many sufferers from cancer, some of them close friends and relations, I have not once—quite literally *not once*—heard them or those near to them speak of emotional disorder or distress as the cause of the disease.

For the rest, I agree with the author that a deplorably and peculiarly paranoid style is often used about cancer, whether by those who fear it, or by those who claim to be able to cure it, or simply by those who employ the term for political or racial abuse. Still, I have difficulty in following her when she begins to link these modes of speech to our "shallow attitude to death" and our "denial of death," and "the large insufficiencies of our culture," and the problem of "how to be severe in the late 20th century . . . when there is so much to be severe about." Language of this kind always strikes me as our equivalent to just those modes of Victorian self-exaltation about which the author is severe enough elsewhere in the book. We may not have God, but it would seem that some of us do have amazing historical eyeglasses through which we can determine all sorts of things—even the fact that people in earlier times managed to have deeper "attitudes" toward death than we do.

Two final points. There are scores of ancient, everyday "metaphors of illness" which are never mentioned in this book—terms like lily-livered; faint-hearted; broken-hearted; spineless; gutless; scatter-brained; swell-headed; stiff-necked; and so forth. Where questions of health and sickness are concerned, I am prepared to accept their testimony (together with at least some examples of more recent medical wisdom) that it is futile to seek for absolute or knife-edge distinctions between body and mind, flesh and spirit. That much said, however, I find it surprising that the author of this book should apparently share one major assumption with the glibly psychologizing tendencies she argues against. That is, she seems to believe that *if* one admits a psychological component in the etiology of cancer or any other serious disease, this must have important consequences for the manner in which the disease is treated. I do not see that this need be the case at all. Surely to deal as directly as we can with the pathogens in a man's system is an easier, kinder, safer, more modest, and more effective way of proceeding than to try to remake that system overall, according to some inconceivable model of what it should really be or how it should really behave.

Faith & the Holocaust

THE JEWISH RETURN INTO HISTORY. By EMIL L. FACKENHEIM. *Schocken. 296 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID SINGER

SOME TIME after the appearance of its August 1966 symposium, "The Condition of Jewish Belief," COMMENTARY received, and published, an angry letter from a reader in Brooklyn. Why, he wanted to know, had the editors solicited the views only of rabbis and theolo-

DAVID SINGER *is associate editor of the* American Jewish Year Book.

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gians, when what really mattered was the religious outlook of "Jewish shoe salesmen, accountants, policemen, . . . cabdrivers, secretaries"? Now Emil Fackenheim, one of the most sophisticated Jewish religious thinkers, and a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto, has written a book which gives profound expression to the functional theology of contemporary Jews at large. Indeed, in *The Jewish Return Into History* Fackenheim underscores his own "momentous discovery" that the masses of Jews—"rich and poor, learned and ignorant, religious and non-religious"—long anticipated his current theological position.

For Jewish theology, 1967 was a watershed year. Prior to that time, the Holocaust had played hardly any role at all in Jewish religious thought. In fact, the editors' questions which framed the August 1966 COMMENTARY symposium on the state of Jewish belief did not so much as mention the Holocaust. Nor, for that matter, did Emil Fackenheim, in his own lengthy contribution to that symposium, take more than passing note of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe. It was the Six-Day War, or more precisely the trauma of the days preceding the war, that made the Nazi Holocaust a central issue for Jewish theology. In those dark days, Jews were suddenly confronted with the possibility of a second genocide within the space of a single generation, and that experience produced a deeply-felt need to confront Auschwitz in religious terms. Today, of course, Holocaust theology is a basic element of Jewish theological reflection, and no one has contributed more to it than Emil Fackenheim.

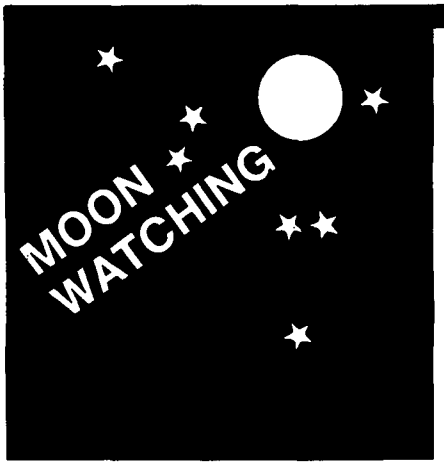
Fackenheim's new book, a collection of essays written over the past decade, many of them quite personal, could very well have been entitled "My Return Into History." For as he makes clear in his introduction to this volume, the essays gathered here reflect a major change in his theological outlook: a "conscious repudiation" of the view that "philosophical and religious thought [can remain] . . . indifferent to the 'accidents' of 'mere' history." Where he once believed that Jewish faith is "essentially immune to all 'secular' events between Sinai and the messianic days," Fackenheim now embraces the view that Judaism must make itself vulnerable to the "stern challenge of epoch-making events." Those epoch-making events are clearly indicated in the subtitle of his book: "Reflections in the Age of Auschwitz and a New Jerusalem."

WHAT does Fackenheim have to say about the Holocaust? Basic to his new theological posture, which received one of its earliest formulations in an article in COMMENTARY ("Jewish Faith and the Holocaust," August 1968), is a distinction between the attempt to find a "purpose" in the Holocaust and the attempt to respond to it. Fackenheim regards the former as a "blasphemous" enterprise, the latter as "inescapable." Because Auschwitz was a "unique descent into hell," an "unprecedented celebration of evil," Jews have to respond to it. But how? By heeding, Fackenheim avers, the "commanding Voice [that] speaks from Auschwitz." While this Voice sends forth no redeeming message, it does issue a "614th commandment":

> *Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler.* They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world. . . . Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish.

The 614th commandment, Fackenheim asserts, is an "abrupt and absolute *given,* revealed in the midst of total catastrophe," and, as such, is binding on every "authentic" Jew, whether religious or secular.

Several times in *The Jewish Return Into History,* Fackenheim



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The Politics of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church
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Science, Sin, and Scholarship delves into the multifarious aspects and activities of the Moon movement—its metaphysics, politics, and sociology. Documents by Moon and an objective presentation of his theological views, as set forth in *The Divine Principle,* are included. So are extracts of testimony given before a House Subcommittee on the Korean lobby and transcripts from related court cases. But the heart of the book consists of the specially written articles by Frederick Sontag, Thomas Robbins, A. James Rudin and Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, Barbara W. Hargrove, Jai Hyon Lee, Marianne Lester, Ann Crittenden, Berkeley Rice, Daniel Batson, Frank Baldwin, Chris Welles, Irving Louis Horowitz, and Sister Agenes Cunningham, along with her associates J. Robert Nelson, William L. Hendricks, and Jorge Lara-Braud. These articles explore the religious sociology and the political theology of the Moon movement—the web is found to be far-flung and intricate, and the contributors follow its various strands to some unexpected connections.

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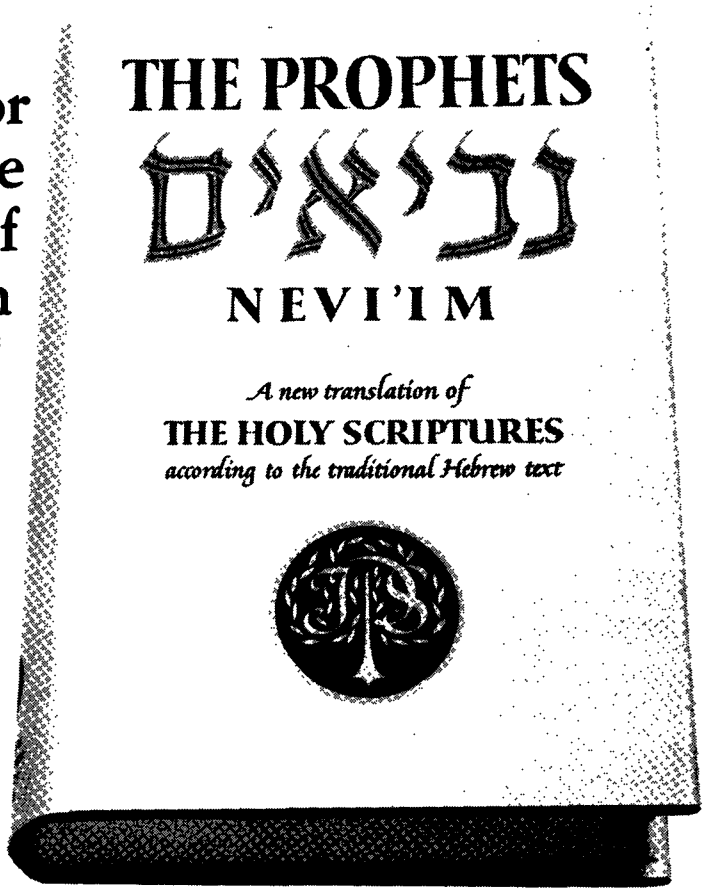

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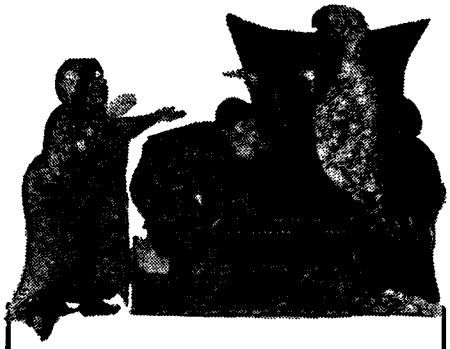

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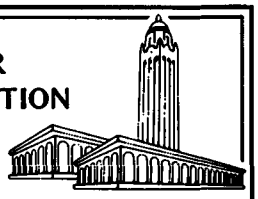

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takes note of the fact that he once regarded "mere" Jewish survival as of little consequence. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, however, he has come to see in any commitment whatsoever to Jewish survival a "monumental act of faithfulness." As Fackenheim explains it:

> For twelve long years [1933-45] Jews had been exposed to a murderous hate which was as groundless as it was implacable. . . . For twelve long years the whole world had conspired to make Jews cease to be Jews wherever, whenever, or in whatever way they could. Yet to this unprecedented invitation to group suicide, Jews responded with an unexpected will to live—with, under the circumstances, an incredible commitment to Jewish group survival.

This "momentous response," having nothing to do with tribalism, embodies the essence of the 614th commandment. Today, that commandment expresses itself most particularly in a concern for the welfare of the state of Israel, which is "collectively what every survivor is individually: a No to the demons of Auschwitz, a Yes to Jewish survival and security." For Fackenheim, the contemporary rallying cries, *"Am Yisrael Chai"* ("the Jewish people lives") and "We are One," are testimonies of faith no less compelling than the traditional *"Ani Maamin."*

WHILE *The Jewish Return Into History* is addressed primarily to a Jewish audience, the book also seeks to speak to Christians. Fackenheim has long been a leading participant in interfaith dialogues, but over the years he has become less sanguine about the possibilities of Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Here again the crucial experience is the Holocaust as filtered through the events of June 1967. In the days preceding the Six-Day War, Fackenheim was flabbergasted by the silence of the churches, by their indifference to the possibility of a second Holocaust. This indifference, he came to believe, had its source in the traditional Christian view of the Jews as "a fossil, an anachronism, a shadow." Because Christian leaders harbored "old, unconscious, theologically-inspired doubts" as to whether the Jewish people had the right to live, there was "no moral Christian outcry against a second Auschwitz." But had this situation not already been made clear at the time of the first Auschwitz? Fackenheim was led to conclude that there was a definite relationship between Nazi and Christian anti-Semitism; that "Nazi anti-Semitism, while anti-Christian, would have been impossible without centuries of Christian anti-Semitism." This is the "painful truth" which stands between Christians and Jews.

The Jewish Return Into History can be assessed in a variety of ways. As a statement of a theological position, it is open to question on a number of counts. (Is the Holocaust really an "absolute *novum*" in Jewish history? Can a religion which places the Exodus at the center of its faith grant equal status to a totally destructive event like the Holocaust? Why should the traditional Jew, who lives by the 613 commandments, need an additional one to insure Jewish survival? In what sense can the secular Jew be commanded, when he does not believe in a Commander?) As a collection of essays, moreover, the book is quite repetitive and lacks the intellectual excitment of its immediate predecessor, *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy.*

But these are secondary considerations. What is really important about *The Jewish Return Into History* is the perfection with which it expresses the credo of today's Jewish "man in the street." Jews around the world have, indeed, heard a voice (perhaps not the Voice, but still a voice) speaking from Auschwitz, and they are determined to do everything in their power to insure Jewish survival: no second Holocaust, no posthumous victories for Hitler. While there may still be those who speak disdainfully of "mere" Jewish survival, most Jews know in their bones that after Auschwitz, Jewish life "does not need to be sanctified. It already *is* holy." The words are Fackenheim's; the sentiments belong to Jewish shoe salesmen, accountants, policemen, cabdrivers, secretaries.

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Playing Politics

THE PARTIES: REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS IN THIS CENTURY. By HENRY FAIRLIE. *St. Martin's. 236 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK

LONG before Watergate, Richard Nixon, and Spiro Agnew, politics ranked low on opinion scales of admired professions in American life. It is easy enough to understand why this has been the case. The American Constitution was carefully structured to exclude from the political realm fundamental questions of morality and purpose. When the system is working as it should, politicians concern themselves not with such issues as power and justice, truth and purpose, virtue and consent, but with the finding of proximate means to modest ends. Because we have generally enjoyed freedom and tranquility, and elected officials have succeeded one another peaceably, we have tended to focus on the unheroic aspects of democratic politics, giving little thought to the question of how institutions are sustained or to the talents needed by those who sustain them.

This focus on the mundane and material aspects of our common life operates to defuse the destructive potential of political conflict and to protect the nation against the more riotous political passions. Unfortunately, however, it also encourages the chronic devaluation of political institutions and politicians. More important still, it tends to obscure the fundamentals of the political enterprise. It is therefore good that we be reminded from time to time of the nature of politics in a free society. Henry Fairlie, the most prolific foreign commentator on American life currently residing in our midst, comes bearing precisely such a reminder. His work during the last decade—which has treated such diverse events and phenomena as the Kennedys, Watergate, anti-Americanism, permissiveness, political parties, and political leaders—is devoted essentially to a celebration of the "at once sublime and ridiculous process by which free men contrive to govern themselves." So unexpected is this theme in political writing that it has been generally overlooked or ignored by Fairlie's reviewers, who have tended to concentrate instead on his numberless opinions—occasionally incisive, occasionally perverse—about specific men and events.

Although *The Parties* is not a good book, it does make a contribution to Fairlie's ongoing study of politics in a free society. While most contemporary writing conceives politics in terms of allocation (who gets what, when, and how), Fairlie operates from an architectonic conception of politics as the master science which orders the whole. Politics in

JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK, *the author of* Political Woman *and* The New Presidential Elite, *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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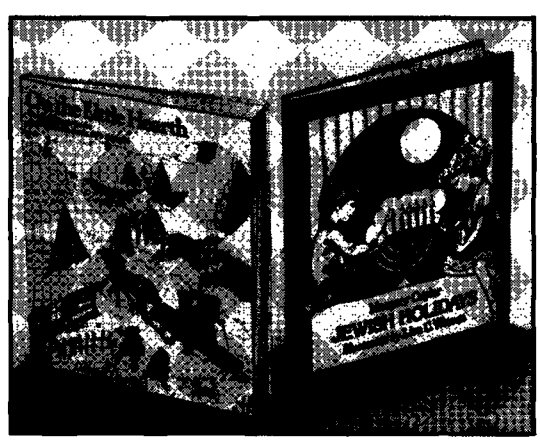

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this sense consists in reconciling the diverse interests and wills characteristic of a free society; it does not seek ultimate solutions or perfect order; does not attempt to eradicate differences; does not force citizens to be free. It is the antithesis of totalitarianism. Yet so conceived, politics is a noble activity.

"There can be no morality in politics," Fairlie wrote in an earlier essay on Watergate, "and no possibility of it—if those who hold the highest positions (including their servants) have no sense of *amicitia*"—which is that sacred bond of trust that limits conflict, breeds restraint in the exercise of power, and binds the individual to shared purposes. Fairlie argued that Richard Nixon floundered because he trusted no one—not his colleagues, not the people—and the absence of trust encouraged and permitted his abuse of power. Nixon's failures, that is, were rooted in his character —but also, Fairlie believes, in the weakness of the Republican party and its inability to constrain a President governing in its name.

To dramatize the inadequacies of that party, Fairlie in his new book imagines a toast to its standard-bearers since Theodore Roosevelt: "I give you, ladies and gentlemen, the party of"—Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Alf Landon, Wendell Willkie, Thomas Dewey, Dwight Eisenhower, Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford. Although he has a good opinion of Eisenhower and respect for Ford, Fairlie considers the Republican record as a whole unworthy of a great party. The root of the trouble, he thinks, is that the party has never felt "at home" in the 20th century, and this is the reason it lacks firm direction, cannot command the loyalty of its adherents (who are always threatening to form third parties), and is so vulnerable to personalist and ideological movements. While the whole Republican scene strikes him as dismal, Fairlie has a higher regard for the party's conservative wing, and especially for Robert Taft, whose perseverance, political tenacity, and "principled stubbornness" gave him a certain integrity, though it also reinforced his limitations.

Like Taft, Everett Dirksen and Barry Goldwater fare better at Fairlie's hands than do representatives of the Republican party's liberal wing. In describing these latter, Fairlie gives full rein to his talent for invective: Wendell Willkie was "one of the most preposterous figures ever to lead a major party," Thomas Dewey was a man who "struts sitting down," Charles Percy has "raised vacillation to the level of a moral principle." Fairlie's harshest words are reserved for Nelson Rockefeller, here presented as the prototype of the failure of liberal Republicanism: "the most ineffably incompetent politician on the national scene, the All Star of Born Losers, the black hole of the Republican universe."

BUT if the Republican party cannot look to its establishment liberals for leadership, neither can it hope to find salvation in the Sun Belt, because that political region exists only in the fevered minds of despairing Republicans who have been overly influenced by academic political scientists (of whom Fairlie thinks almost as little as he does of liberal Republicans). There is no emerging Republican majority, only a shrinking minority comprising conservatives who "distrust, dislike, and fear their own time." The Republican situation is, quite simply, hopeless; the party lacks leaders and followers, lacks vision and compassion, and is incapable of governing even when it controls the White House. The sickness of the Grand Old Party is one reason why this is a Democratic century.

Other reasons are found in the strengths of the Democratic party. To that party, Fairlie ascribes most of the virtues missing among Republicans. While Republicans distrust politics and fear power, the Democrats "instinctively" acknowledge the preeminence of politics and of government over other social realms. While Republicans concentrate on narrow economic interests, Democrats understand that men need and want to feel like moral members of a moral society—not in the pinched Puritan sense of "thou shalt not," but in the sense of taking responsibility for the whole community and espe-

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cially for its less fortunate members. While the Republican party was throwing away the black vote (in an action described here as an astonishing, almost incredible, error), the Democratic party "instinctively" and "resolutely" identified with "this subject minority" and assumed the responsibility of incorporating blacks into full membership in society.

As the reader will have guessed, the Democratic party which Fairlie celebrates is the party of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and, yes, Lyndon Johnson. Spearheaded by the labor movement, which has provided a steady "sense of direction," the Democratic party has elicited voter support in elections at all levels because it has spoken "to the gut economic issues that still determine the lives of millions of ordinary people." It has been a missionary party, at home and abroad; its Presidents have put their stamp on the century.

BUT politics takes place in history and history is flux. The capacious Democratic party contains elements which, if not precisely hostile to the party's traditional composition and direction, bring to it different interests, a different style, even a different conception of the times and the public agenda. Fairlie has a sharp eye for the contradictions contained in the bosom of American liberalism and a marked distaste for the well-educated, well-off, fastidious reformers whose privilege, self-righteousness, predilection for style, and "smirking sense of superiority" have repeatedly threatened to deflect the Democratic party from its historic economic concerns to those cultural issues which are so much more interesting to the "literate liberals" who "go to politics for theater." This literate liberalism of the privileged professions (John Kenneth Galbraith and Fred Dutton are special targets) "might indeed be called effete; one might even say that it is Eastern: certainly it is the Establishment."

In addition to all these faults, Fairlie sees in purist liberals another deadly vice: dislike of politics and disdain for the tasks of politicians. Thus, Adlai Stevenson had his charm, "but in the end one cannot sympathize with a politician who does not like to be on the stump." Fairlie's political heroes do not—*à la* Common Cause or Ralph Nader—seek to silence the articulation of all interests but their own in the political arena. They do not imagine that reason and grace have put them above the clash of interests. They do not imagine political questions can be dealt with as though they were problems of mathematics, administration, or metaphysics.

What, then, does Fairlie think of Jimmy Carter, the President who ran against Washington, who imagined that in winning he incurred no debt to any "special interest," who promised to use the methods of engineering to solve the problems of government, who presented himself as, above all, an administrator? Obviously, Fairlie has questions. The questions are raised, but never dealt with. In the final chapters, however, a judgment is vouchsafed: Carter is a man with a "capacity to govern strongly," and this in the end "set him firmly in the tradition of his own party in this age."

FAIRLIE'S judgments of particular politicians are less bothersome than are his standards of judgment in general. Without doubt the Democratic party, sparked by its powerful labor component, has provided most of the nation's leadership in this century. Its conceptions of the use of public power have been more compelling than those of the Republicans. Its vision and policies have been more inclusive and generous. As compared to the Democrats, Republican leaders in our time have been more resistant to sharing wealth and power, and less ready to use government to secure minimum well-being for all; more inclined to espouse doctrines of self-interested materialism, and less prepared to assume responsibility for the whole. With all these judgments of Fairlie I fully concur.

But it is less clear that these Democratic virtues derive (as Fairlie suggests) from an "instinctive" understanding of the preeminence of politics, or that Republican fail-

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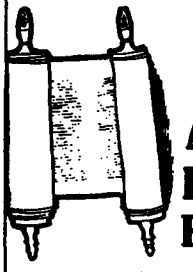

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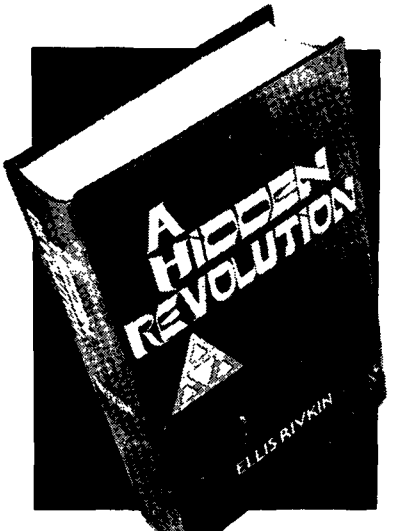

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ures stem from the desire to preserve the primacy of economics. And although it is obviously undesirable that government should be the agent of any single part of the society, it does not follow that government should be the master of the society and all its institutions.

Ultimately, Fairlie's Tory enthusiasm for strong government confronts the liberal conviction that dispersion of power is a precondition to the protection of liberty. The issues involved here transcend welfare-state liberalism; they reach back to the struggle to limit royal prerogative and forward to the temptations of totalitarianism. Just as Fairlie believes there is a case to be made for King John (of Magna Carta fame), he is impressed, too, with the case for socialism. Taming the power of the great corporations seems to him "the" next task on the American agenda, whereas containing the power of government over the lives and resources of citizens appears hardly to concern him at all.

FAIRLIE'S admiration for strong leaders and strong government renders him as tolerant of the successful as he is brutal to those who fall short of achieving the power required to impose their vision of the public good. It is not exactly that, for Fairlie, might makes right. But it helps. Nor is it necessarily that whatever is is right; but it frequently turns out that way. There is present in Fairlie's interpretations—of Jimmy Carter, Wendell Willkie, Lyndon Johnson, Adlai Stevenson, Republicans, Democrats —a kind of neo-Hegelianism in which political *virtù* (of the Machiavellian variety) results from an alliance of power and the *Zeitgeist*. Perhaps at some other time and place Henry Fairlie will spell out for us the version of English idealism that informs this book on parties. Perhaps he will sometime give us a more systematic statement of his views of the relations among leadership, choice, and history. In *The Parties* he has given us mainly opinions and prejudices, too often uninhibited by those virtues of restraint he finds so laudable in the exercise of politics.

After Liberation

DOMINUS: A WOMAN LOOKS AT MEN'S LIVES. By NATALIE GITTELSON. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 291 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

IT WAS to be expected that the women's movement, in whose peak years—the 60's and early 70's —there was born a veritable industry in feminist books, would in time give rise to a literature of reexamination. Less conspicuous now on the publishers' new lists are the "mad-housewife" novels, fiction in which wryly sensitive and (invariably) artistically inclined heroines struggle to maintain sanity in the face of housework and child care; on the way out, too, are the anthologies of feminist poetry, the primers on consciousness-raising, the endless studies of women in a sexist society. In their place have come books dealing with the effects of the women's movement, and although many of these new books are determinedly up-beat and brave-new-worldish, others are, if not negative about the women's-liberation movement, then at least ambivalent. It is to this latter category that Natalie Gittelson's *Dominus* belongs.

An editor at the New York *Times Magazine*, Mrs. Gittelson has traveled the length of the United States and through parts of Europe to pursue her inquiry into the aftermath of women's lib. In *Dominus* (the Latin word for master) she focuses in particular on the ways in which the movement has affected the lives of men, how they have come to see themselves as a result of it, and how they feel about renouncing traditional male prerogatives and responsibilities. Having interviewed married and single men, black as well as white, homosexual as well as heterosexual, in this country and Europe, Mrs. Gittelson concludes that the state of psychic health in which men find themselves today leaves much to be desired. Despite a preface which seems designed to placate their

DOROTHY RABINOWITZ *is the author of* New Lives: Survivors of the Holocaust Living in America.

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wrath, women's liberationists will not welcome her report.

In the course of her travels Mrs. Gittelson encountered men who have paid an extreme price for their compliance with some of the new fashions in living that emerged from the women's movement. She presents sad testimony from a range of witnesses: the "house-husbands," confused and unhappy, who accepted the role of babysitter and homemaker in order to allow their wives to go out into the world and "realize themselves" by earning the family living; the single swingers, ambivalent toward sex and distrustful of attachments; the blue-collar men frightened by the presumptions of their newly-emancipated women; the ideologue couples living out their verson of revolutionary consciousness, by reversing roles.

All of these new fashions in living, these role reversals, have, Mrs. Gittelson asserts, damaged and confused men, and not only men but women also, and not only psychically but also physically. Thus, a drily evocative introduction to two of her subjects, a liberated couple "fed up with rigid role definitions," includes the following description: "Thelma was square and her hair was short. Benjamin was round, and his hair was long. Her hips were narrow and her shoulders were broad; his hips were broad and his shoulders were narrow. . . ."

Despite Mrs. Gittelson's sympathy for the damaged men she portrays here, she by no means absolves them of responsibility for the state they find themselves in; it is a central premise of *Dominus* that men, in accommodating themselves to even the wildest demands of women's liberation, have thus actively abetted their loss of mastery, and that they have done so in order to escape the burden of responsibility imposed by traditional definitions of manhood. The growing inclination of men to shuck off such responsibilities, Mrs. Gittelson notes, is evident most plainly in the growth of "men's-liberation" groups where, following the example of women's consciousness-raising sessions, men come together to discuss male experience.

That these groups inevitably seem

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to have a strong homosexual component is part and parcel of the entire syndrome Mrs. Gittleson is describing. Indeed, *Dominus* is especially lucid in its documentation of the assault on heterosexuality mounted in recent years by propagandists for women's liberation and gay liberation and by the new school of sex clinicians who offer them sustenance. At one lecture on male sexuality addressed by a sex clinician, and described here, an audience of medical students listens uncritically while being informed of the ways in which homosexual gratification is superior to heterosexual: the homosexual, they learn, is less selfish because he is committed to the giving rather than the receiving of pleasure; he is also less "goal-oriented" (a good thing, supposedly), and can better extend his "repertoire of gratification" than can the non-homosexual. Such propaganda for the virtues of homosexuality—and also for the virtues of autoeroticism—is, Mrs. Gittelson observes, the covert and sometimes even the overt message not only of the new sex "workshops" but also of works like the best-selling *Hite Report*.

About all these phenomena Mrs. Gittelson is refreshingly clear-eyed. Among the more eerily compelling scenes in the book, for example, is an encounter between a men's group and a theoretician of the new "men's-liberation movement," come to address them on the subject of the male role and its inherent burdens. The lecture over, the men are asked to form a circle and hold hands; no sooner is the circle achieved than the men in it confide that they would rather hug than hold hands, and that they want to "explore" homosexual relationships. Warmly gratified by the group's response, the lecturer whispers happily to the one who first broached his desire to make love to men, "I was *hoping* you would get more support." "It was," the author observes, "difficult to imagine how much more support he could have gotten—short of an outright invitation to sodomy."

Mrs. Gittelson's irreverence serves her in especially good stead when dealing with her subjects' dreary attitudinizing about the "meaning" of their lives. As an interviewer, she offers a happy alternative to the fawning respect that so many pop sociologists lavish on their subjects. Yet she is not always as forthright as she might be in her commentary. One important failure of this work is Mrs. Gittelson's frequent willingness to allow implication, or aside, to do the work of statement. Moreover, *Dominus* is positively evasive when it comes to such controversial issues as affirmative-action programs for women, one of a number of subjects that seem almost palpably to terrify the author. Still, for its clean prose, and the clarity of its vision, *Dominus* must be counted a welcome corrective to much current cant.

Education & Equality

THE REVISIONISTS REVISED: A CRITIQUE OF THE RADICAL ATTACK ON THE SCHOOLS. By DIANE RAVITCH. *Basic Books. 173 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by MARC F. PLATTNER

THE late 1960's and early 1970's produced an extraordinary outpouring of radical scholarship devoted to attacking not only American social and political institutions but also America's understanding of itself. Inasmuch as that self-understanding had been forged largely by the liberal tradition, the radical assault was aimed above all at liberalism, which appeared surprisingly unable or unwilling to defend itself. One area of scholarship in which such anti-liberal revisionism has been particularly influential is the study of the American public school. Here radicals have argued that, far from being democratic agencies of social mobility and cultural diversity, the schools have in fact been coercive and regressive institutions, designed to reinforce the racial and class biases of American society.

In the preface to *The Revisionists Revised*, Diane Ravitch laments the long silence of liberal

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scholars in the face of the challenge posed by the educational radicals. Her book is an attempt to refute the radical critique of the schools and in so doing to reaffirm the liberal view of American educational history. The targets of Mrs. Ravitch's counterattack range from Marxist economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis to anarchist Joel Spring, and include such other scholars as Michael B. Katz, Clarence Karier, Colin Greer, and Walter Feinberg. These authors do differ among themselves on some important particulars, and Mrs. Ravitch devotes one lengthy chapter to a series of brief individualized treatments of the radical critics in which she distinguishes among their basic approaches and skillfully points up deficiencies in their use of historical or sociological evidence. But the greater part of *The Revisionists Revised* consists of a more general argument directed against the common outlook essentially shared by the radicals.

Mrs. Ravitch broadly summarizes the radical perspective and its contrast with the liberal viewpoint:

> Where liberals had argued that the spread of public schooling was social progress, radicals saw the public school as a weapon of social control and indoctrination; where liberals had maintained that reforms like compulsory schooling freed children from oppressive workplaces, radicals saw compulsory schooling as an expansion of the coercive power of the state; where liberals believed in the power of schooling to liberate people from their social origins, the radicals perceived the school as a social sorting device which undergirds an unjust, exploitative class system; where liberals considered the school to be an integral part of democratic society, radicals viewed it as a mechanism by which one group (an elite) exploits and manipulates another (the masses or the workers or the minorities or "the community"); where liberals had worked to insure that individual merit would be rewarded without regard to race or religion or other ascriptive factors, radicals described the outcome of this effort as meritocracy, hierarchy, and bureaucracy.

Disputing the radicals' reading of the historical record, Mrs. Ravitch concludes that schooling was not imposed by elites upon blacks or ethnic minorities against their will, but was eagerly sought by the minorities themselves. Next, she demonstrates that American society has been characterized by a high degree of upward social mobility, and she argues that schooling has been and remains today a major vehicle of social advancement toward greater economic opportunity.

Despite her impressive marshaling of evidence, however, it is unlikely that Mrs. Ravitch will convince those who view America through a radical lens. American public schools not surprisingly reflect the values prevalent in American society as a whole, and those who oppose those values will continue to deplore their transmission through our educational institutions. For most other readers, Mrs. Ravitch's book is likely to provide

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primarily a confirmation of what they feel they already know from their own experience and observation—namely, that scholastic success is possible for all those who have the talent and the desire to achieve it, and that it is most often the road to occupational and economic success as well. That a host of influential scholarly works could be based upon the denial or obfuscation of these obvious facts is a sign of how thoroughly American academic and intellectual life was transformed by the mood of the 1960's.

In many respects that mood now seems to have largely faded from the American scene, and yet its effects continue to be very much present. Although the radical tide is ebbing, liberalism remains in disarray and on the defensive. This persisting defensiveness is evident even in *The Revisionists Revised*, where a certain apologetic tone creeps in at some critical places.

For the most part, it is true, Mrs. Ravitch presents a spirited counterattack against the radicals. In a number of passages, she recognizes the fundamental hostility of the radicals to the liberal principles she supports, noting their "thorough rejection of liberal values and liberal society." Yet elsewhere she seems implicitly to accept the notion that the goals of the radicals do *not* essentially differ from those of liberals—that radicals are merely more impatient with the pace of social change, less fastidious about the means used to attain it, and less willing to compromise their ideals for the sake of taking the practical steps necessary to begin achieving them through the political process.

This ambivalence on Mrs. Ravitch's part reflects the generally twofold nature of the radical attack on American liberalism. Radicals typically concentrate most of their rhetorical firepower on the failure of liberalism fully to realize in practice its own ideals and principles. (This, of course, is a charge to which any dominant political tradition will be vulnerable. And it is one to which American liberalism has been particularly vulnerable because of the one enormous failing on America's historical record—its past mistreatment of its black population.) Yet it is frequently the case that the radicals themselves repudiate the very principles that they accuse liberalism of failing to live up to. Take, for example, the principle of equality of opportunity. Although radicals attack liberal society for failing to provide genuine equality of opportunity (and hence adequate social mobility), most of them in fact reject the ideal of equal opportunity in favor of the very different principle of equality of results.

Mrs. Ravitch is aware of the centrality of this issue, and she devotes the final portion of her chapter on "Education and Social Mobility" to a concentrated discussion of it. It is precisely here, however, that her argument is at its weakest. Rather than sharply drawing the opposition between equality of opportunity and equality of results, she asserts that liberal social policy properly combines these two concepts, and wrongly identifies government social programs and the progressive income tax as policies founded on the principle of equality of results. She then goes on to suggest that modern liberal democracy demands a delicate balancing of equality (of results) with liberty and efficiency, thereby implying that the radicals' error on this fundamental issue is merely a matter of degree: they are willing to sacrifice too much in the way of liberty and efficiency for the sake of equality.

But this way of defining the opposition between liberals and radicals is bound to leave liberals always on the defensive. For it allows radical egalitarians to occupy without a fight the high moral ground of justice (under the banner of equality of results). Efficiency, despite its undeniable practical force, is a principle that only an economist can love; and liberty, for all its moral nobility, is unlikely to be able to hold the field for long if it is perceived as being in opposition to justice. Thus, if liberalism is to regain its moral self-respect, it must unequivocally reject the radical principle of equality of results and

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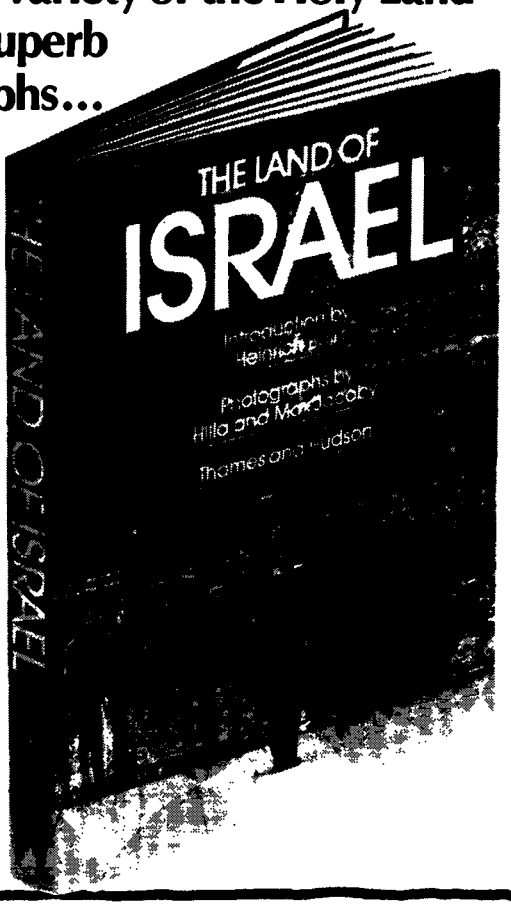

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reaffirm the notion of justice implicit in the liberal principle of equality of opportunity. That is, it must unashamedly defend the idea of merit, which holds that those individuals who perform with greater talent and greater effort justly deserve greater—i.e., unequal—rewards. For unless they are ready to stand by their own principle of justice, even liberals as intelligent and as spirited as Diane Ravitch will find it hard to restore to liberalism its former good conscience.

The Truth?

LYING: MORAL CHOICE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE. By SISSELA BOK. *Pantheon. 326 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

SISSELA BOK is opposed to lying, but in her highly selective and tendentious book on the subject she directs her attention primarily to lies told by those occupying positions of power and responsibility in American society. Typical examples of deceitful misstatement cited by Mrs. Bok are the following: President Johnson's lying about the war in Vietnam when he invoked the "domino theory" in support of his policy; President Nixon in the Watergate affair; the lying of advertising agencies when they show mashed potatoes on TV while talking about the virtues of ice cream; the lying of factory owners to employees about the effects of unionization on future business; the CIA's lying about its operations at home and abroad; much "cavalier," "condescending," and "joking" deception by doctors when they give patients placebos or wrongly encourage terminally ill patients to believe they will get better; the lies of religious leaders and "enthusiasts" who "manipulate" their followers by perpetrating "pious frauds"; the lies of government officials and those who run for elections who "often deceive when they can get away with it"; and even the lies of parents, who, although they may not be part of the power structure of American society, nevertheless represent power within the family.

The lies of people who do not hold special positions of power, trust, or responsibility in society are judged less stringently by Mrs. Bok. At the least, she tends more often to regard such lies as excusable or defensible. Thus, in this book against lying, lying appears to be more excusable for, among others, members of unpopular religious or racial or sexual groups who feel obliged to "pass in order to avoid persecution." Or again, lying is defensible for "a couple driven to seek divorce in society where it can be granted only for adultery"; here, a lie may plausibly seem "a small price to pay in order to achieve release from their marriage and the freedom to marry again." Similarly, a draftee during the Vietnam war may be more readily excused for having lied because of what the country's policies forced him to do. In such cases, Mrs. Bok cites approvingly the contention that "the system is much less excusable than the individual deceit which forms a part of it."

To counteract lies and to prevent them from spreading, Mrs. Bok calls for "publicity." That is, an individual in a position of power should be prepared to defend, before a group of "reasonable persons," the justness of his decision to lie. "Publicity" also requires a willingness to "share the perspective of those affected by our choices" to lie. According to Mrs. Bok, this is required by our commitment to democracy, which puts special responsibilities on those in "professional and powerful circles" to consult the views of "those who might object." But she warns that the circle of consultation cannot be too large in all cases, because there is sometimes a question "about just how 'reasonable' the available public actually is. One may even ask whether any public *can* be reasonable enough." For example, when the lies for which one seeks permission involve those regarded as "religiously, politically, or sexually deviant by the majority," the

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public ought *not* to be consulted, because these issues "invite biased responses" from it; what one needs in such cases is the consent of persons who will be "reasonable" in a "higher sense." Mrs. Bok does not specify who these people are.

Considering the lies of United States government officials, especially President Johnson, Mrs. Bok asks what the world would be like if government officials in other countries around the world lied the way United States leaders do "and felt similarly free to deceive provided they believed the deception genuinely necessary." In the end, however, Mrs. Bok says it is not simply a matter of individual liars like Presidents Nixon and Johnson; rather, the trouble is our society itself. According to Mrs. Bok, the "stress on individualism, on competition, on achieving material success which so marks our society . . . generates intense pressures to cut corners"; in America there are many powerful "social incentives to deceit." Therefore she suggests an alteration: "all would benefit if the incentive structure associated with deceit were changed." In the final analysis, lying is a social problem that will be meliorated by a change in the system, presumably one that would also bring about the demise of "individualism," "competition," and the drive for "material success."

Mrs. Bok's choice of which lies to attack reveals something about her own relation to the truth. Judging from the "evidence" that unfolds in this book, she seems to be motivated less by a general philosophical antipathy to lying than by a devotion to certain political and ideological attitudes. Her ground is a hodgepodge of various fashionable critiques of America all of which agree on the point that America is not a truly humane society. In Mrs. Bok's faith there is a fondness for moral, religious, and social liberty but a disdain for economic liberty and the "incentive structure" on which economic liberty (and arguably, other liberties) depends. There is a strong dose of philosophical Naderism. The revelation seems to have passed her way that the small and powerless are beautiful and the large and powerful are ugly. There is an exuberant, but qualified, populism: the "People" are to be defended and trusted—except, of course, when they cannot be trusted to be reasonable in "any higher sense"—that is, Mrs. Bok's sense. All of this is brought together in a theory of victimization. Mrs. Bok is committed to the view that faceless and cynical government leaders, businessmen, doctors, and lawyers spend a large and enjoyable part of their time victimizing and "dehumanizing" others.

Counter-evidence, evidence that would cut against her faith, is not considered. Very important lies therefore go unmentioned in this book. There is no treatment, for example, of lies by the Soviet Union and its apologists about arms build-ups during a period of détente. There is no discussion of lies perpetrated by those who claim to speak *for* America's "victims," the many lies and deceptions of "preferential treatment" and "reverse-discrimination" programs, the sundry corruptions of welfare. When it comes to private matters, there is a discussion of the *need* to lie when adultery has been committed, in order to achieve "release" from a marriage and to be "free," but there is no discussion of the lie that is adultery itself.

In short, what emerges from Mrs. Bok's litany is not an honest devotion to truth-telling but pious political sentiment. At home, Mrs. Bok invites anyone who feels he is a victim of the system to judge his actions by a standard less demanding than that by which he judges others. Abroad, Mrs. Bok encourages and contributes to the false characterization of the United States as a malevolent example to the world. All she succeeds in proving thereby is that her own thesis is neither objective nor governed by principle.

If we are to have a regard for truth, at least for truth in publishing as well as truth in speaking, this book should have been given a different title. Not *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, but perhaps *Lying by the Powerful in American Society*; or *How Certain Types of Lying by the Powerful in America Excuse the Lying of Their Dupes*; or *Lying: A Selective View*; or *America: A Land of Lying Leaders; or How We Are Duped by the System of Deceit in America*; or *Lying: American Leadership's Bad Example to Other Countries*; or even *The Political-Economic Basis of Lying in America*.

Has Mrs. Bok lied to us? Not, perhaps, by her definition—"lying is an intentionally deceptive message in the form of a statement"—but her definition of lying is inadequate. For surely this book is sorely at odds with the truth, both by virtue of what Mrs. Bok does say about her subject and by virtue of what she avoids saying. Why and how does the lying of leaders, or the "coercions" of the "system," excuse the lying of those who are led? How do these alleged "coercions" in the system qualify moral responsibility? What "political" and "religious" and "sexual" deviants have been crushed? From our present vantage point, was the then loudly discredited "domino theory" so clearly a fabrication? Are the liars of the United States any match for the liars of the Soviet Union or those of scores of other nations? What examples of truth-telling societies not built on "incentives" and "competition" does Mrs. Bok have to offer as moral examples?

It is not just misrepresentation but a denial of truth when the behavior of American government leaders and the moral character of the United States as a nation, on the entire record, are compared unfavorably with the behavior and moral character of other leaders and other nations. Mrs. Bok's fear of a world in which others followed our example amounts to a deception on her part. For all our lying, the world would be a much more honest place if it followed the example set by the United States in the totality of its actions.

In writing a book on any subject at all an author ought to be scrupulous in revealing his assumptions, prejudices, and political predispositions. How much more so when writing a book on lying. When the topic is truth, the reader has a right to expect truthfulness.

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Doral Menthol	12	0.8
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Kent Golden Lights	8	0.7
Kent Golden Lights Menthol	9	0.7
Kool Milds	14	0.9
L&M	17	1.0
L&M Lights	7	0.6
Lark	17	1.1
Marlboro	17	1.0
Marlboro Lights	12	0.8
Marlboro Menthol	14	0.8
Merit	8	0.6
Merit Menthol	8	0.6
Multifilter	13	0.8
Newport	18	1.3
Parliament	9	0.6
Raleigh	16	1.0
Real	9	0.7
Real Menthol	8	0.6
Salem	16	1.1
Salem Lights	10	0.8
Vantage	11	0.8
Vantage Menthol	11	0.8
Viceroy	16	1.1
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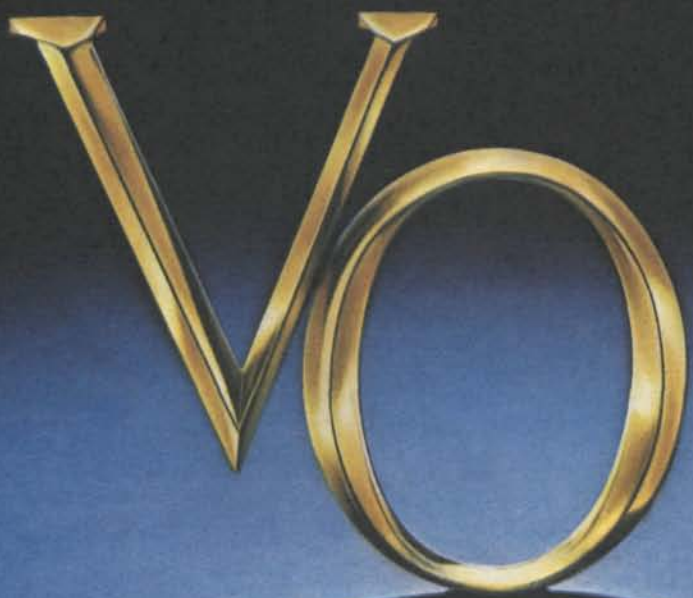

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